

JESSICA
SMITH
People
*come
First*

People *come First*

BY JESSICA SMITH

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PEOPLE COME FIRST

Jessica Smith made a six thousand mile tour of the Soviet Union soon after the end of the war. She was in Moscow, Leningrad, Gorky (Nizhni Novgorod), Stalingrad, Baku, Rostov-on-the-Don, and in collective farms in the outlying districts. She visited schools, colleges, nurseries, factories, hospitals, theaters, libraries, workers' clubs, sports arenas, and the homes of Soviet citizens. She talked to housewives, workers, students, teachers, trade union officials, administrators, writers, theater directors and political figures. She traveled by plane, car, railroad and steamer, and she returned to America on a Soviet freighter—an unforgettable chapter in itself. She saw the vast devastation and the terrible human costs of the war effort that saved civilization and democracy. And she saw the almost miraculous reconstruction of the land where "people come first."

All this Miss Smith amplifies from her many years of previous travel and experience in the Soviet Union. Industrial reconversion, the planning of new cities and industrial regions, the new trends in Soviet housing, the Soviet family, culture, education, sports, the trade unions, social security, economic and political democracy and above all the fight for peace—almost every aspect of Soviet life is presented in its latest phases and in its full development. It is told with the immediacy and intimacy of firsthand contact and with the rounded understanding that comes from rich past experience and many years of continuous touch with Soviet developments.

Miss Smith's travels in the Soviet Union—her recent journey was her fourth—began with two years of famine relief work in the Volga region in 1922-24. Returning

(Continued on back flap)



The author and Captain Sariev

to America, she assisted in raising funds for Russian Reconstruction Farms, an enterprise organized by Americans to teach modern farming methods to Russian peasants. Returning to the USSR in 1926, Miss Smith spent two years on this project in the North Caucasus, with a group testing and establishing methods later applied on the collective and state farms. In 1935 she revisited the Soviet Union, traveling in Crimea, the Ukraine and the Urals. Since 1936 she has been editor of "Soviet Russia Today," a monthly magazine devoted to the furtherance of American-Soviet understanding. She has lectured extensively and, in addition to the present volume, is the author of "Women in Soviet Russia."

It is this unusual background of experience and continuous contact that makes possible so full and vivid a book.

PEOPLE COME FIRST

BY JESSICA SMITH

Editor, Soviet Russia Today



INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

TO MY SON DAVID

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CHAPTER I

THIRTY YEARS' QUEST FOR PEACE

My first trip to the Soviet Union was in 1922. I went as a member of the American Friends' Service Committee to do famine relief work in the Volga region after the great drought of 1921 which brought hunger and death to millions. Our main work was the distribution of food in the stricken Buzuluk area and helping, as was the custom in these Quaker units that went around the world in the wake of war, in general reconstruction work. This relief and reconstruction work, made possible by voluntary contributions, was the part played by the Society of Friends in the larger program carried out by the American Relief Administration, which operated on a Congressional appropriation.

For more than two years I lived in the Russian village of Sorochinskoye, headquarters of the American Quakers, and in my own outpost in the village of Gamaleyevka, and I made frequent trips to other villages in the large area covered by our work. I acquired a knowledge of Russian sufficient to read it and to speak it, ungrammatically, but well enough to make direct contacts with the people. When the relief work was over, I stayed on for almost another year in Moscow, visiting factories, schools, theaters, workers' homes and clubs, new construction projects—watching the turbulent and thrilling process of a new civilization taking shape.

That was the year that Lenin died. I mingled with the crowds that poured into Moscow from the far corners of the land and mourned together in the icy streets for the leader they loved, and vowed that his work would never die. And over their grief and sense of loss lay the consciousness of the inheritance

Lenin had left them, the shared ownership of their mighty land and all its rich resources.

I saw the Russian people struggling to build their new life after the years of World War I, the Revolution and the subsequent civil wars, prolonged because of the armed intervention of fourteen nations, including our own. The majority of the people supported the Soviets and had foreign powers not armed and supported the White Guard generals and sent in their own troops to overthrow the new government, peace and stability would have been swiftly established. It is worth remembering to-day that it was Winston Churchill, then British Minister of War, who was the main instigator of this armed intervention against the Socialist Republic. Large slices of Russian territory were lopped off. At the height of the foreign interventionary period, the Soviets were squeezed into one-sixteenth of the former Russian land area.

But the young Red Army, poorly-armed as it was, and the strength of the Soviet people, prevailed against their enemies. They won back their land, although part of it was torn from them by Germany in the robber peace of Brest-Litovsk and by the Allies in the final peace conference in which the Soviet state was not permitted to share, although in the war against Germany, Russia had lost more men than all the other Allies combined.

The years of war were followed by the worst famine in history, by typhus and other epidemics, by severe shortages in all essential goods and other difficulties magnified by the unceasing efforts exerted by the outside world to destroy the Soviets. Food production dropped to less than half of normal. Industrial production, never highly developed, went down to fifteen per cent of the pre-war level.

When at last peace came within the Soviet land and along its borders, these cataclysmic upheavals and disasters had cost the lives of twenty-three million people. A *cordon sanitaire* was built against them, ringing the Soviets with hostile states. The anti-Soviet war was carried on by blockade, counter-revolutionary plots, and other means when direct intervention failed. But this war too they fought and won; and against such odds as no people on earth had ever faced, they began to build their new socialist society. These facts should be remembered when we consider the place held by the Soviet Union as one of the two major nations in the world today, after the new staggering devastation and losses

in World War II inflicted on them by the fascist invaders.

In 1928, after a year back home in America, I received an opportunity to go to Russia for another two-year period. This time I went as a member of the Russian Reconstruction Farms, a group of agricultural experts and social workers organized by my husband, Harold Ware (who died in 1935), to introduce modern American farm machinery into the U.S.S.R., and to teach the peasants its use. It grew out of famine relief work that Harold himself had done previously, when he had taken the first group of American tractors to Perm, to help grow food more productively on Russian soil. The Soviet government allotted to the Russian Reconstruction Farms group over 15,000 acres of farm land at Maslov Kut in the North Caucasus with grain fields, vineyards, farm buildings, a flour mill, and cattle. The Americans furnished mechanical equipment and trained personnel to develop a model state farm and training school. Along with the farming experts went doctors, nurses, and social workers, to help spread modern methods of health care and hygiene in the surrounding villages.

The American group of twenty-five members lived in an old manor house at "Plakseika"—"Place of Tears"—so named by the peasants who worked there in tsarist times because of the cruelty of their landlord. All around us were the endless spaces of the lovely steppe country south of the Don, blooming with every variety of flower and flashing with brightly colored birds. Nightingales sang in our garden. In the springtime red tulips glowed among the tender green shoots of the vast wheat fields, planted by American machines, which became a golden sea at harvest time. In the early dawn and at sunset we could see the ranges of the Caucasus etched against the sky and the twin peaks of lofty Mt. Elbruz.

The peasants came from miles around to see the American tractors and harvester-combines at work and marveled at the flood-lights rigged up from our own dynamo station that lit their way at night. The collective farm movement was just starting and groups of young farmers came to learn the methods of large-scale agriculture later developed to such a high level. The Americans and Russians worked well together. The Russians learned quickly and soon there were trained experts for every job the Americans held. Here were worked out many of the methods later applied when collectivization became the main form of Soviet agriculture.

This project, like the earlier program of famine relief, was a practical gesture of friendship on the part of Americans that the Russians have never forgotten.

The villages which I had known during the famine period—although the peasants at last had adequate plots of land replacing the old strip system, and the Soviet regime had brought vast changes in their lives even in those early days—carried over many remnants of tsarist times. Still backward, superstitious, the peasants referred to themselves as “dark, ignorant people.”

But in my later Maslov Kut days, a new village, a new people were emerging. All the children were in school, and many of the adults had become literate. In the village meetings, we saw the growth of the new Soviet democracy as expressed in the active participation of the whole people, men and women alike, in the solution of the problems that touched their day-to-day lives. Before our eyes, the old primitive village of the wooden plow was being transformed. Modern machinery was bringing a higher material standard of living and social and cultural advantages utterly unknown in the past.

When I again came home to America at the end of 1927, I had lived for almost five years among the Russian people. I had watched them struggle upward from the depths, painfully, sometimes blunderingly, but always in the larger view, heroically and gloriously. I saw them laboring to bring forth a new, free life, pioneering to make their land yield its abundance for the whole people. It seemed to me that our two peoples had much in common, had much to give each other, much to learn from one another. The Soviet people wanted our friendship, our trade, our co-operation. They had an almost extravagant admiration for everything American, and despite our government's hostile attitude which ruled out diplomatic relations, they felt that the American people were their friends. Above all, the Soviet people wanted to live in peace and continue building their country.

Because almost everything that I heard and read about the Soviet Union after my return to this country was contrary to what I had seen with my own eyes, I felt that I must use my own experiences in whatever way I could to help dispel the ignorance and misunderstanding of the Soviet Union.

The hostile policy toward the Soviet Government, so detrimental to our country's interests, was continued through the suc-

cessive Republican regimes of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. But large sections of the American people pressed for friendship with the U.S.S.R., and a new era in American-Soviet relations began with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He saw the advantages of extension of trade to our economy, understood that increased co-operation in scientific and cultural fields could only benefit our nation. Above all, he appreciated the Soviet efforts for collective security against the rising menace of fascism, and knew the two countries must stand together. On November 16, 1933, diplomatic relations were established after a lapse of sixteen years.

While the bitter anti-Soviet propaganda of certain circles never ceased, the new policy of friendship and co-operation opened the way for increased knowledge and understanding of the Soviet Union among the American people. Thousands of Americans visited the Soviet Union in those pre-war years, attending international conferences, traveling widely through the land.

The changes I observed on my third visit to the Soviet Union in 1935 were even greater than during my first two visits. There had been grave difficulties in between. There had been the struggle for collectivization, won against the bitter opposition of that survival of the old regime, the Kulak class (wealthy peasants and their supporters who lived by exploiting others). The struggle for industrialization had won against the wrecking and sabotage of those who, not believing as did Stalin, like Lenin before him, that socialism could be built in one country, tried to prevent its success by every means in their power. Collectivization, now firmly established, had brought incredible advances in the countryside. The Second Five-Year Plan was already under way; new industries were rising everywhere; the Stakhanovite movement had released undreamed of creative forces; and a new people's culture had come into being. That was the year Stalin was able to say: "Life has improved, comrades. Life has become more joyous. And when life is joyous, work goes well. Hence the high rates of output."

When I went back to visit my old stamping grounds of Sorochinskoye and Gamaleyevka, I found new villages, new people. Their very faces looked different. Polia, the illiterate peasant girl who had looked after my little peasant cottage in Gamaleyevka, had taken a course in child care, and was now working

in a day nursery for the children of the peasant women. There were moving-picture houses, schools where none had been before, modern farm buildings for the collective farm herds in place of the former tumbledown sheds, machine and tractor stations whose complements of modern machinery tilled fields that reached to the horizon in place of the former tiny unproductive plots. I visited the great new iron and steel and tractor factories at Magnitogorsk and Cheliabinsk, saw the people working at their machines without strain, and the many new educational and social and cultural institutions that indeed made life better and more joyous. The material level, not yet high by our standards, was incomparably better than it had been when I was there before. And it was clear that if a long period of peace and stability stretched ahead, with help instead of interference from the outside world, another ten years would bring a tremendous rise in living standards.

But that was not to be. In the pages that follow I record what I saw in the Soviet Union after the end of the war, when I spent almost four months visiting cities and countryside, covering some six thousand miles.

The war was still very close in those autumn and early winter days of 1945. You saw its deep wounds wherever you looked. But you also saw the indomitable spirit of the people, expressed in two things—their determination to rebuild as quickly as possible and create a life even better than before, and their determination not to have another war. With the latter went the resolve that fascism be eliminated everywhere forever. They had fought an anti-fascist war; they wanted an anti-fascist peace.

There have been many changes in the three years since my visit, both within the Soviet Union itself, and even more in the field of international relations. Within the Soviet Union there have been great forward strides in the reconstruction work which was just beginning when I was there. In 1946, the Fourth Five Year Plan was launched, with its over-all goal of a fifty per cent increase over pre-war production by 1950. Industrial output reached the pre-war level by the end of 1947. After a setback in agricultural production in the summer of 1946, which saw the worst drought in fifty years in the Ukraine and other food-producing regions, the 1947 harvest brought high yields.

These economic advances made possible the final abolition

of rationing by the end of 1947, a general lowering of prices and the ruble reform which put greater purchasing power in the hands of the people. Increasing quantities of food and consumers' goods made their appearance as hundreds of new shops were opened. Living standards have risen appreciably since 1946.

In the international sphere, and especially that of American-Soviet relations, the Roosevelt policy of friendship and co-operation with the Soviet Union has given way to the cold-war policy in which our great wartime ally is regarded as an enemy.

The postwar changes in American-Soviet relations do not, it seems to me, lessen the importance of what I saw when I was there, when the Soviet people were still acting on the assumption that the wartime alliance would and must be continued and strengthened in the peace.

I found an immense fund of good will for the American people. I heard no belittling of the war contribution of America and the other Allies, or of the extent of direct American aid to the Soviet people. I got the impression that as much as possible had been made of this aid to strengthen the morale of the Soviet people through knowledge that they were not alone in the struggle. If there was any suppression of news while I was there, it was, if anything, in the direction of playing down our anti-Soviet propaganda and maneuvers. The anti-Soviet propaganda was well under way when I left the United States, but I found any mention of it and any questioning of America's desire to continue the Roosevelt policy rather embarrassing to the Russians. They wanted to believe the best of our country, and their longing for peace was so great that they found it hard to imagine we could seriously entertain policies that might lead to another war.

That, certainly, has changed. Today the Soviet press and radio speak frankly and critically about American policies and American hostility to the Soviet Union. But they take care to differentiate between groups in America who are pursuing policies that, if unchecked, will lead to another war, and the American people as a whole, in whom they still have confidence, who they believe do not want war, and who they feel remain essentially friendly to the Soviet people. Therefore, I am convinced that the reservoir of friendship for the American people which I found remains. Let us not continue our reckless waste of it to the ultimate danger point.

In presenting this picture, however inadequate, of the Soviet people in the immediate postwar days, I am not trying to gloss over all that has happened since, or to make it appear that all is sweetness and light in their attitude toward our country. How could it be, with the blasts of the cold war blowing so steadily from the West?

But there is a world of difference between the tenor of the criticism of the United States on the part of Soviet officials and press, and the anti-Soviet campaign that has been raging with increasing violence in our country since the end of the war. Pronouncements by government officials and military leaders, statements in our press and over the radio, bristle with outright instigations to war on the Soviet Union. And the warlike words are backed by warlike deeds. Our wartime ally is openly named as the enemy against whom all our unprecedented military preparations are directed. The Truman doctrine and the Marshall Plan are avowedly based on war considerations. A separate Western Germany is being built up with its war potential restored, to become the core of the new Western Union which, under American guidance, has become a military alliance aimed against the Soviet Union. Our leaders seem bent on replacing the grand alliance of the anti-fascist war with a new coalition in which our former enemies stand with us against our former allies. A dark threat hangs over the United Nations as the Western nations seek to turn it into an instrument for splitting instead of unifying the world.

Search as you will through any statements by Soviet leaders or in Soviet publications, you will not find a single word calling for aggression against the United States or any other nation. Turn the strong light of truth and understanding on Soviet policies within and without the United Nations, and you will find no shred of evidence that they are motivated by any aggressive intent toward anyone on earth. On the contrary, Soviet leaders constantly stress both the possibility and the need for peaceful co-existence of the socialist and capitalist systems, and have insistently advocated disarmament measures.

I have sought to give a picture of the Soviet people in their first supreme relief over their liberation from the hideous burdens and sufferings of the war. I have shown how quickly they went about demobilizing their army, reconverting their war industry,

turning all their attention and their energy to the pursuits of peace.

The Soviet people have continued their peaceful building. But they see what is happening beyond their borders, they are fully aware of the plans of aggressive imperialist circles to organize a new world war, they hear their country branded as the enemy of world peace. While they know that between the plans of the war instigators and the possibility of their realization there is a wide gap, they also know the danger of a new war must be reckoned with.

So, while their demobilization has been completed and the Soviet army is back at a peace-time level, and while military expenditures only hold about half the place in the Soviet budget they do in ours, it would be childish to assume that they have not geared their plans to the possibility of a new war.

Some of the factories I saw speedily converting to peace-time production may now have been turned back to war production again. No doubt they have had to slow up some of their plans for expanding consumers' goods production and to postpone their enjoyment of many of the comforts they have dreamed of, just as they did in the years between World War I and II. No doubt the Soviet scientists who were so weary of devising means of destruction are again at work on new types of weapons.

What else could be expected when they are faced not only with our refusal to enter into a convention for the outlawry of atomic energy for destructive purposes, and our continued stock-piling of bigger and better bombs, but when they read of American plans to bomb Soviet cities, "to scorch and destroy the vitals of the Soviet state," as a recent magazine article put it, as they see the ominous reality of American military and air bases circling the globe at points that can have only Soviet territory as their objective?

The point I am trying to make, in presenting this book today, is not that nothing has changed, but that the *will to peace* I saw everywhere among the Soviet people remains and can only be broken by an aggressive war directed against the Soviet Union.

If that happens, and *only* if that happens, we may be sure the will to fight will flame as brightly again as it did in the war against the Axis aggressors. It is silly to speculate on Soviet weakness—even sillier now than it was in the days when the Soviet army and people were given six weeks by high military experts to fall before

Hitler's mechanized might, as so many others had already fallen.

Because the ravages of the war were so vividly with them at the time of my visit, I have in this book stressed the war losses and the war weariness of the Soviet people as a factor for peace.

When the war ended, the Soviet people asked for simple, elemental things. To know that people were not dying needlessly every minute, to know that they themselves would wake up alive, to be with their families again, to read books, to go to the theater, to think, to work, to build, to reach new heights in art and science, new comfort and beauty in human living, to explore without end the wonders of the universe and turn them to man's needs.

Of course the sacrifices and ruins and bloodshed of the war were behind their immediate drive for peace—and still are today, not only in the Soviet Union, but wherever the war struck—for such deep and dreadful wounds are not healed in one year or in three.

But above and beyond that, the will for peace of the Soviet people grows out of the very basis of their Soviet society. Not in the soil of chaos and war can socialism thrive. However far away its full attainment—and farther still because of the setback of the war—their goal is full freedom and democracy and abundant life for all the people. This they can have only when they are free to concentrate on peaceful labor, and make the earth yield ever more of its rich resources, and produce enough goods to satisfy the needs of everyone. This they can do only in a world of stability and peace, not of upheaval and atomic war.

In the socialist society the Soviet people have already built, and the communist society toward which they strive, no man or group of men can profit by the building of armaments, because profits gained by exploiting the labor of others are outlawed under their system. There are no groups among them to press for war contracts. No group of workers need depend for employment on war industries, because the plan for developing the country's resources and industries and agriculture provides productive work for all the people as far into the future as the human mind can penetrate. There are no monopolists desiring war to protect their foreign investments or bring new areas for exploitation under their control. In a planned economy no war crisis is necessary to avert an internal crisis. The workers well understand how much greater gain will come to them in producing for peace than in producing

for war because they, the joint owners of the country's wealth, share in all they produce.

The socialist society has no room for any concept of aggressive warfare. The Soviet Constitution itself provides for war only in case of external aggression. Holding the view that capitalism is already an outworn and dying system, which will be replaced by socialism as inevitably as capitalism itself replaced feudalism, they believe this will come only when the majority of the people are convinced of its necessity, and cannot be imposed on any land by force.

The size and concept of this book preclude a discussion of Soviet foreign policies. But I must emphasize here the utter falsity of the contention on which our whole warlike policy is based, that the Soviet Union has embarked since the war on an aggressive, expansionist policy. With a few exceptions of small territorial acquisitions recognized as essential for Soviet and general security and agreed upon by the other allies, the presumed "aggressions" of the Soviet Union consist only of the repossession of territories that were once a part of Russia and were separated from it by force. Even enemies of the Soviet Union have conceded the validity of the security reasons behind this repossession. But it is important to note that only when considerations of security have coincided with the will of the people has any territory become a part of the U.S.S.R., which would derive no benefit from the incorporation of dissident peoples within the Soviet family of nations.

In a conversation with Mayor Popkov of Leningrad, he remarked that those who wrote as though everything was wonderful in the Soviet Union were no more helpful than those who wrote as though everything was terrible. He cautioned me to write only the truth—to set down the bad as well as the good.

I have pondered this wise advice a great deal, and I must confess it is hard for me to follow. Of course, I saw bad things, incredible difficulties. But the way in which the Soviet people were overcoming their difficulties seemed to me more important to record. Of course I did not see everything, nor did the Soviet people tell me everything. That is not possible for anyone who goes to the U.S.S.R., or anywhere else, as a visitor. The tourist role was a rather difficult one for me, because I have lived in the Soviet Union and worked there and known the people through

normal day-to-day contacts. Rushing around a country as a visitor, asking questions, interviewing people, bursting into their homes and trying to lift the cover of their intimate personal problems is hardly the best way to learn about a country. But I think that having lived among the Soviet people before gave me an advantage over the casual visitor.

I have commented in a number of places in the pages that follow about the ennobling effect of the war on the Soviet people. That is not contradicted by the other cases where war also, by its very nature, had a demoralizing and brutalizing effect. The heroism and selfless sacrifices of the whole Soviet people are not contradicted by cases of corruption, by the instances found after the war of heads of factories or collective farms who embezzled funds and lived well while others went without. Nor is the overwhelming fact of the unity the Soviet peoples as a whole displayed in the war negated by the defection of the Crimean Tatars and other small groups in the North Caucasus, or by individual traitors, who were exceptions to the general rule. Not all people can endure such strains without breaking, nor are heroes always heroic.

Because so much of the anti-Soviet propaganda today harps on the theme of the alleged absence of individual freedom in the the U.S.S.R., I cannot emphasize too strongly the fact that one of the things that struck me most forcefully was the heightened concern for individual needs I found everywhere. With the immense loss of human life in the war, more attention than ever is being paid to the needs of the living. The official figures put the number killed in the war at 7,000,000—but if all who lost their lives from causes attributable to the war were to be counted, this figure would probably be doubled.

Certainly there was primary emphasis on restoration of industry and machinery and all the basic industrial enterprises. The magnitude of the reconstruction tasks facing the Soviet people can be gauged by mentioning just a few of the staggering losses. Over 600,000 square miles of territory with a population of 88,000,000 were occupied by the enemy armies at the height of the German invasion. In this area the invaders demolished and burned, completely or partially, 1,710 towns, over 70,000 villages, 98,000 collective farms, over 6,000,000 buildings, 31,580 industrial enterprises, 40,000 hospitals and medical institutions, 84,000 schools, 48,000 public libraries; 25,000,000 people were de-

prived of their homes. The devastated area included some of the richest and most highly developed industrial sections of the country, accounting for about one-third of the pre-war industrial output. This was partially compensated during the war through the evacuation of many factories and the building of new industries in the Urals and the East, which achieved miracles in wartime production.

But side by side with the industrial reconstruction, everywhere there was more concern than ever before for consumers' goods, housing and living conditions. I found that the thread of everything led back into the home, into the life of the individual. In trade union work, the basic unit is kept small so that the group organizer can look after not only the needs of the workers on the job, but can visit them regularly at home and give them whatever personal help may be necessary. In the schools, the teacher's responsibility did not end in the class room; she had to know about home conditions, whether each pupil had proper facilities for study and for play, whether there were any psychological problems due to the family situation. It was not considered enough to provide the Red Army veteran with money, a job, and a place to live. There was equal concern that he be emotionally adjusted, have the kind of job he enjoyed and feel the warmth and love of society.

Wherever I traveled, I found this concern for the individual human being. The Soviet view that each individual has a responsibility to society which must be fulfilled does not derive from a view of the state as an entity apart from and with any interests differing from those of the individuals composing it. They see it as an organization protecting the people and their common possessions from any elements within which would sacrifice the general welfare to their own interests, and from outside attack. Socialist humanism, concern for the human being as the most precious of all capital, and for the building of a society which will safeguard the rights of all who contribute to its progress—this is the essence of the Soviet world outlook. Perhaps it can best be expressed in a simple phrase I heard so many times, "People come first."

CHAPTER II

IN POST-WAR MOSCOW

In the summer of 1945 I was able to make arrangements for my fourth trip to the Soviet Union through the courtesy of V.O.K.S., the U.S.S.R. Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. Ten days after V-J Day, I boarded the *Nordningholm*, bound for Sweden.

By a stroke of good luck I obtained the one vacant place in a plane carrying a group of Swedish engineers to Moscow to inspect the Moscow subway with the view of building one like it in Stockholm.

We flew southward along the Swedish coast, climbing above the clouds piled all around in lovely, gleaming, blue-shadowed shapes. Over the Baltic a huge Swedish lunch was served. I learned that the engineers had tons of food on the plane, to provide them for their stay in Moscow where they feared they would not get enough to eat.

Then we were over Soviet land—Estonia, Latvia, barely glimpsed through the clouds, then the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic itself. I could not believe that just below the Germans had been not so long ago. But their marks were there. Harvested fields, fall-plowed fields, forests, and swamps were all pitted with deep bomb wounds. As we flew lower, I glimpsed devastated villages and the fresh wood of new buildings gleaming among the ruins.

Down at the Moscow airport. Russian women porters helped with the baggage. The field was in perfect condition, but the paths to the main building were muddy and unkempt. This, I was to find everywhere, was typical. The essentials of recon-

struction first, the trimmings later. Driving along Leningrad Chaussée into Moscow, I noticed that in the outskirts of the city vegetable gardens covered every available inch of space. Many buildings were shabby and in need of paint, but most of the bomb damage had been repaired in the outskirts and all of it in the center. The streets of the city were wide and clean, and lively with traffic. Jeeps and war-battered cars darted around. One change I noted was that there was not a droshky anywhere in sight. I saw that the Kremlin walls and towers, which on my previous visit had been painted white, had been restored to their original soft, weathered red.

Soon I was installed at the Savoy, an old familiar hang-out to me, the same old stuffed bear still in the lobby. More of the gilt had peeled off in the past two decades, but the rooms were freshly painted and comfortably appointed.

Immediately I was whisked off to a reception given by V.O.K.S. in honor of the chess champions who had just won the radio match with America. Botvinnik, the Soviet champion (who became world champion in 1948), was making a speech. His descriptions of the chess plays were incomprehensible to me, but his comments about the importance of American-Soviet ties and how such matches helped to promote them were clear and friendly. Next Papanin, of North Pole fame, chairman of the V.O.K.S. chess section, introduced Averell Harriman, then American Ambassador in Moscow, who also commended warmly the cementing of friendship through chess.

After more speeches, we were invited into the next room where tables were laid out with food. As the newest arrival from America, I rated a seat with the guests of honor at a table where Mr. Kemenov, the able chairman of V.O.K.S., was entertaining. At the table were Ambassador Harriman, Papanin, Botvinnik, and several Congressmen on a junket to Moscow. Kemenov was toasting the guests, and finally came my turn. Kemenov raised his glass to me and the magazine I represented and its work for American-Soviet Friendship. Remembering a sharp editorial I had recently written, attacking Ambassador Harriman's behavior at the San Francisco Conference, which had certainly not been helpful to American-Soviet friendship, it was an embarrassing moment for me. But if the Ambassador had seen the editorial, he gave no sign, joining in the toast to me and *Soviet Russia*

Today without a quiver. (Page the un-American Committee.)

Another V.O.K.S. reception was arranged in honor of Senator Pepper and a second Congressional delegation, headed by Representative Colmer, which arrived while I was in Moscow. Leading Soviet artists performed for the guests. Not to be outdone, the Congressmen and Senator Pepper put on a concert of their own, rendering in harmony *Swing Low Sweet Chariot*, *Old Kentucky Home*, *Good Night Ladies*, and other American favorites. One of the Congressmen took over the drum in the orchestra. Senator Pepper stepped out and executed a buck and wing in good old southern style. The Senator made a warm statement on American-Soviet friendship, and Congressman Colmer expressed the wish that more Americans would come to Moscow since, "in the words of the poet, to know you is to love you." I fear the Congressman has since forgotten those sentiments.

The people at V.O.K.S. were prepared to arrange for me to see whatever I wished and travel anywhere I desired. They put an interpreter at my disposal, Ksana Bakchevnikova. I could understand most of what was said, but was too rusty to be able always to put what I wanted to say in intelligible Russian. They were quite willing to leave me to my own resources if I wanted to wander around the city alone and look up old friends.

Few signs of actual war destruction were apparent in Moscow, but the feeling of the war was everywhere. No painting had been done for years; many windowpanes were missing. The people still wore their pre-war clothes, and footwear especially was deplorable. Uniforms were conspicuous. Everywhere I saw crippled and wounded men and women. The ravages of the war could be seen in people's faces. But as cold weather approached—winter came early that year—warm coats, good boots, and the indispensable *valenki* (felt boots) began to appear. The children especially were adequately dressed. The people looked as though they had enough to eat. Shops began to fill up with goods. As household goods appeared in the stores, the women fell on them like locusts. The main theme in the papers was the drive for consumers' goods to make up for the years of deprivation. But everyone knew it would be a long time before they would have anything like the standard of living they had begun to enjoy before the war.

The deep sorrows the war had brought lay over everyone. There was literally no one I met who had not lost someone. But

everywhere there was the immense relief from tension. "Just to know that our people are not dying every minute—that is the wonderful thing!" was the way one of my Russian friends put it.

Moscow's pre-war population of some four million was swollen to about seven million. There hadn't been enough room in Moscow before the war, and there certainly wasn't enough room for these additional millions. There were new buildings going up everywhere, but it would take a long time to catch up with the need. The Moscow subway was as magnificent as ever and several beautiful new stations had been added during the war. But to get on it during rush hours was a feat. I've never experienced anything quite like it even in New York. The big station opposite the Metropole Hotel was a particularly rough spot. From a loud speaker just above the door where the crush was at its height, a calm voice asked the people not to push, to take their time, and gave directions for the different trains.

The close and continuous communication between the Soviet government and the whole people is apparent in Moscow and the process adds to the congestion. On Moscow converge individuals and delegations from all over the vast country to attend conferences and congresses, where the varied peoples of the Soviet Union exchange ideas and experiences. Sometimes they come to confront the appropriate government department with a local problem that needs attention. Sometimes they come to receive government awards for a local undertaking or some individual achievement in science or art. Such government recognition is characteristic of the Soviet Union, and spurs people to greater efforts. Sometimes the award itself takes the form of a trip to Moscow. Trips are made by government officials to all parts of the country. All this means a tremendous coming and going from the far corners of all the sixteen Soviet Republics to the capital.

During my stay in Moscow there was a constant stream of delegations from Poland, from Finland, from Yugoslavia, from Czechoslovakia, and other countries of eastern and southeastern Europe—youths, scientists, writers, educators. They came eager to exchange ideas and culture. These people had no sense of being behind an "iron curtain." They found their contacts with the Soviet people rich and rewarding, and it was plain that the Soviet policy of friendship with these countries was not a policy of "remote control" but of developing friendship between the coun-

tries through establishing real friendship between their peoples.

Like all great metropolises, Moscow has both its good side and its bad. All the best that the Soviet Union represents is to be found there—and all the worst. As the government center, it is the source of Soviet policies in foreign affairs, in national economic planning, in trade union questions, in science and art.

Moscow is the real scientific and cultural center. Here is the headquarters of the Academy of Science, with local academies and branches in every republic. Leningrad still considers itself the main cultural hub of the country and it does indeed have a rich cultural life. But Moscow draws the artists and writers irresistibly and has actually displaced Leningrad as the cultural center. The intense friendly rivalry between the two cities reaches its climax in the field of ballet, each city passionately claiming its own to be superior. But while Moscow is the center, every republic and locality has its own rich cultural development. The opportunity for the people of each nationality to develop to the fullest extent their own cultural traditions is an outstanding feature of Soviet policy.

Every provincial city also has operas and theaters. There are altogether 926 theaters and opera houses in the U.S.S.R. They include 371 dramatic theaters, 47 opera and ballet theaters, 33 musical comedy and operetta theaters, 17 musical-dramatic theaters, 277 collective farm theaters, 70 children's theaters, and 11 puppet theaters. This aside from thousands of special theaters and musical groups run by trade unions and other organizations, and hundreds of concert halls.

Practically every night while I was in Moscow I attended either the opera, ballet, theater, or some other form of entertainment. Only through the courtesy of V.O.K.S. was I able to do this because the houses are sold out weeks in advance. Rates are comparatively reasonable and factory trade union committees make tickets available to the workers at low rates.

The Moscow the foreign colony knows is far from the real Moscow or the real Russia. I can understand why some correspondents find Moscow a rather dull place and leave with a distorted picture of Soviet life. The Metropole Hotel, where most of them live, is rather gloomy. The correspondents get their picture of Soviet life from the newspapers, which take on real meaning only as one sees the life they reflect. The Soviet press is an organ-

izing force, full of exhortation to effort in whatever campaign is most important at the moment. These campaigns mean a great deal to the people who are a part of them, but their significance is dim in the four walls of a Metropole room. The papers run articles that in our country would be published only in serious magazines. They carry no spice and gossip, little of the speculation and "inside dope" in which American newspapermen like to indulge. All the unsavory elements in Soviet life gravitate to the foreigners, the malcontents and misfits, the people to whom clothing and nylons from abroad mean more than being a part of the immense but rewarding labor of building their country. These people constitute only a speck among the masses of the Soviet people, but when they are all one meets, it is inevitable that their opinions should be taken as typical. The language difficulty is great, as any correspondent in a foreign country knows. It is worth noting that for the most part, those who have been able to talk directly to the people have written the most enlightened and sympathetic accounts of the Soviet Union.

It is not my purpose here to delve into the whole question of censorship and relations with the foreign correspondents in Moscow. Certainly they have cause for gripes. But considering the attitude of many of the correspondents, the way they have abused facilities given them to get around the country and see what they want to see, it is understandable that they do not always receive the co-operation they feel they deserve. Correspondents who have made real efforts to go out among the Soviet people, to visit their institutions and to travel around the country, have usually been able to do so. It takes persistence, but it can be done. But for the most part the correspondents, discontented and frustrated, sit around the Metropole, feeding each other their sour complaints and passing them on to new members of their colony as they arrive. I have not moved much among diplomatic circles, but a similar situation prevails among them. Their life in Moscow is of their own making, not at all the life of the Soviet people. If contact with the Soviet people has become increasingly difficult for foreigners, this is a direct result of the hostility the Russians have encountered from the representatives of the West.

A lot of Britishers staying at the Savoy Hotel took it for granted that any foreigner in Moscow must share their Cliveden

set ideas. One of them told me the British Embassy considered it a great nuisance to have people sympathetic to the Soviets, like the Dean of Canterbury and J. B. Priestley—who was in Moscow at the time—visit the U.S.S.R. “Just trouble makers,” he described them.

MEETING WITH MIKHOELS

One day I had the privilege of a talk with Solomon Mikhoels, that great Jewish actor and great human being, whose death early in 1948 was such a tragic loss to his own country and the world. I told him some of the things that were said in America about the recurrence of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

A troubled look came over that remarkable face of his, so rugged and yet so tender and expressive.

“Yes,” he told me, “I have heard that things like that are being said. Of course the Nazis not only tried to bring anti-Semitism into our country, but to stir up all nationalities against each other—the Ukrainians, the Byelo-Russians; they tried to spread their poison everywhere. They succeeded in poisoning many human bodies but not the human spirit!”

“But were there any individual cases where they succeeded?” I pursued.

“Of course. Remember, there were millions forced to live for four years under Nazi occupation, cut off from all normal, healthy contact with the Soviet way of life and outlook. Of those millions, inevitably some were weak and undeveloped, especially since in the new Soviet areas there had not been time to eradicate the vestiges of the years of fascist influence. But from those individual cases no generalizations can be made. There is and can be no *problem* of anti-Semitism in our country.

“I myself have traveled throughout our country but have never felt a trace of anti-Semitism. What we Jews feel above all is the immense concern our country and our people have for us. We cannot ever forget how at the most difficult moment for our country’s existence, when every railroad car was needed to carry troops to the front and factories and workers to the rear, the Soviet government still found it possible to provide transport to evacuate hundreds of thousands of Jews from threatened areas, knowing they would suffer most at the hands of the enemy. And

so the lives of a large proportion of the Jewish people were saved.

"Every day we see new examples of the nobility and self-sacrifice of the Soviet people during the war. Today a fifteen year old Jewish girl came to tell me how she was hidden for years by a Ukrainian family, at the risk of their lives. There were many, many such instances among the workers and collective farmers in all the occupied regions."

I asked Mikhoels about Biro-Bidzhan. The varying reaction I heard from Jewish people in the Soviet Union to the question of Biro-Bidzhan was in itself one of the best proofs of the full freedom to choose their own way of life. Many of the younger Jews to whom I talked had no great interest in Biro-Bidzhan as a Jewish homeland. Some had grown up in communities of predominantly Russian or other nationality and had been so completely identified with that culture that they felt no need for an environment of predominantly Jewish culture. At the same time, Jewish theaters, schools, press and synagogues are available wherever there are enough Jews to require them.

But there are also many Jews, young and old alike, who prefer to live in a predominantly Jewish community. For these there are the Jewish communities in the western part of Russia and the Autonomous Region of Biro-Bidzhan in the Far East. The older ones want to live out their lives among people whose ways are their own, while many of the younger ones are attracted by the pioneering venture of helping to build up a new national republic. Mikhoels expressed deep enthusiasm for Biro-Bidzhan and looked forward to its development into a full republic.

"During the war," he told me, "conditions were hardly propitious for much new colonization in Biro-Bidzhan. Remember, it borders on Manchukuo, and there were fascist elements across the border. But now colonization is going forward regularly again and we have many applications to go there. One of the advantages of Biro-Bidzhan over some of the western Jewish communities is that some of the latter are wholly agricultural. In Biro-Bidzhan all sides of life are included—industrial, agricultural, cultural. Nature is beautiful there. Fine new cities and collective farms are beginning to develop. We have a good Jewish Theater there, to which many of the students go from our Jewish Dramatic school here in Moscow. The young people have a wonderful song and dance ensemble. We have a splendid central library which plays

a big role in the preservation and growth of our Jewish culture.”

Concerning the activities of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee—which he headed—in the post-war period, Mikhoels said:

“No one can understand better than the Jews what fascism really means. It is enough to say out of the 7,000,000 Jews in Europe outside the Soviet Union only one million remain alive. As long as any vestiges or roots of fascism exist a dreadful threat hangs over humanity, and most of all over the Jewish people. Therefore our committee seeks to unite the forces of all Jews, not only in our own country but beyond its borders, in the struggle to wipe out all fascism everywhere, forever.”

Mikhoels arranged for me to visit the Moscow Jewish Theater to see the new play, *Afreilichs*, produced under his direction. It was a deeply moving experience. The theme of the play is the building of a new joyous life for the Jewish people now that the war is over. It opens with a tragic representation of all the sorrows and sufferings of the Jews during the war, symbolized by a group of bowed figures in mourning. A group of jesters enter and call upon the mourners to rise—the period of mourning is over, the new life begins. The rest of the play depicts simply, through pantomime, music and dance, the courtship, betrothal, and marriage of a young Jewish couple. The chorus of jesters—representing the “Badkhen” of the traditional wedding ceremony—weaves in and out of the scenes, calling on the wedding guests to join them in song and merriment.

Although I could not understand the words, the deep and beautiful symbolism of the performance was clear. At the end, when the young bride and groom stand with clasped hands one of the jesters turns to the audience—the words were translated for me: “Let nothing ever interfere with the happiness of these young people. We vow it never shall!”

When the lights went on there were no dry eyes in the house, which was made up of Jews and non-Jews. The entire audience sat quite still for a moment in solemn dedication to the fulfillment of those words.

HOMEcoming OF THE SOVIET GI's

One of the most striking outward evidences of the end of the war in the Soviet capital was the homecoming of the Red

Army men. For many who lived in the occupied sections there were no homes left to come to. For many whose families had been wiped out, homecoming could bring only new sorrows. But the population surrounded the veterans with love and care to make up for all they had been through.

Walking the streets of Moscow one often saw Red Army men hand in hand with sons or daughters they had not seen for four years—or perhaps never seen before.

Every night Red Army men thronged the theaters, the younger ones with their sweethearts clinging to them as though they would never let them go again. Women in uniform were also conspicuous, although less so than during the war. They were among the first to be demobilized. The golden stars of the Heroes of the Soviet Union gleamed everywhere, eliciting affectionate and grateful glances. In any public gathering there was hardly a breast that did not bear medals or ribbons, for there was hardly a person who had not played some part in the struggle. Those who had distinguished themselves in production and civilian defense work were considered as deserving of decorations as those who fought at the front.

It is rather difficult for Americans to understand this seeming ostentation. It has to be understood along with the usual awards for outstanding services which provide one of the incentives in the Soviet Union and replace the profit motive. Many decorations carried special privileges—the right of free or priority travel on public conveyances, the right to purchase goods at special stores and many others, so that wearing them had a practical purpose.

The thirteen oldest age classes in the Red Army had been released immediately after the war with Germany, although many were transferred to the Far East. The demobilization under way while I was in the U.S.S.R. included another ten classes. In addition, it took all enlisted men and non-commissioned officers with a higher education or a secondary technical or agricultural education. It also included all servicemen who were teachers or university students before the war, all who were wounded three or more times, and all women except specialists who wished to continue in their branch of service. (Demobilization of the last two classes in 1948 put the army on a peace footing.)

The Ministry of War had set up local demobilization centers everywhere, so that each returning army man or woman

could be taken care of in his own district with a minimum of red tape. I visited one in the Stalin District of Moscow. Colonel Prokofy Tiokavin was in charge. A graying-haired veteran of the Leningrad front with bands of ribbons across his chest, he was unassuming and friendly, with the warmest, kindest eyes imaginable, his deep-seamed face constantly breaking into smiles.

I asked him how the Soviet decree guaranteeing every returning soldier clothing, money, housing, and a job in no way inferior to his pre-war one was working out. He laughed and pointed to a huge pile of papers on his desk.

"Do you see all these applications? There are 10,000 of them—not from men seeking jobs but from jobs seeking men! So far we can only fill 2,000. I can't begin to take care of all the applications for workers.

"Jobs of every possible kind are offered. Stalin District is the most heavily industrialized in Moscow, with aviation plants, machine-building, textiles, and many other types of enterprise. They all need engineers, construction workers, skilled workers, chauffeurs, office workers, administrators, cooks, nurses, doctors, day nursery attendants, club managers, sport directors.

"The Moscow Soviet and the many organizations attached to it also offer a large variety of occupations—keepers for the zoo, gardeners for parks, make-up experts for the theaters, window trimmers, druggists, store managers and clerks, barbers, geologists, economists.

"Each demobilized man has the right to take a month's vacation with pay, but many want to go to work at once. They see that their country needs their help in reconstruction as much as in war, and are eager to have a hand in building the kind of life they fought for."

Colonel Tiokavin then took me through the building, showing me the whole procedure. An interview with the housing representative came first. If the Red Army man had an apartment to go to, but needed repairs or fuel, this was attended to. If he had no home, quarters were found for him. Land is given free of charge, lumber provided, and long-term, non-interest-bearing loans are available for those who wish to build new homes.

It was not possible in all cases to settle the housing problem immediately. Many families, during the war years, had moved

into apartments belonging to others, who now came back to claim them. In such cases, every effort was made to find an equitable solution. Next to the housing representative sat a legal consultant ready to advise the returning veteran how to get his apartment back if someone else was occupying it, or to help settle matters of pensions or family problems.

This preliminary procedure concluded, the Red Army man was received by Colonel Tiokavin who checked his military records and made sure he had received whatever extra clothing and money were due him (mustering-out pay for enlisted men amounted to a year's pay for each year in service) before issuing final discharge papers.

Colonel Tiokavin was ready at all times to assist in any problems of work, study or family affairs. Sometime these were quite complicated, as when a wife had received notice of her husband's death and had remarried, and then the first husband turned up. Sometimes the husband and sometimes the wife came to Colonel Tiokavin to help straighten out such tangles. He encouraged them to talk freely, and the legal adviser helped in arranging annulment or divorce, as the case might be. In the kind of war the Russians had to fight, such errors were frequent.

The next step was job placement. If an immediate selection was made, the demobilized man could go directly to the enterprise to make arrangements. If he wanted time to choose among various openings, he took down the information for decision later. Then, if he wished, he was fixed up with railroad fare and a month in a sanitarium or rest home without cost, or whatever other vacation he chose, received a ration card for food and cigarettes, and emerged a civilian. The whole process took thirty or forty minutes.

When we arrived Colonel Tiokavin was having a talk with Private Mikhail Serov, who had returned from the Baltic Front the day before. He was bursting with excitement at being home.

"I took the train for home right away," he told me, "and I met an old friend. 'Mischa, Mischa,' he said, 'so you're back—when did you get here?' 'Just a few minutes ago,' I told him. 'Have you got work?' 'Not yet.' So he offered me a good job right away, in my own trade. I'm a fitter. I said I'd think it over. Then I went home to see my wife and daughter—and today I came here, and am offered several jobs, all better than I had."

"What are the Red Army men thinking about, now that the war is over?" I asked.

"Our greatest joy is just being home again and rebuilding and making a decent life. You know, we lived well before the war. I made good wages, we had enough clothing, plenty to eat. Maybe my clothes weren't in the latest mode—but as for my wife, she kept in style. Now I want to forget all we've been through—to live a comradely, friendly life, even better than before."

Then Second Lieutenant Daniel Pocheltsov came in, just back from a military hospital of the Third Byelo-Russian Front. An electrician before, he would have liked to return to his own specialty, but his nerves were somewhat shot. Colonel Tiokavin had suggested administrative work for a while. His wages before the war had been 1,200 rubles a month; the jobs now offered would bring 1,500 or more.

And what were his general feelings about the post-war world?

"I never expected to live after my third wound, so just the simple fact of being alive is very wonderful to me. The main thing, it seems to me, is friendship with our allies, and especially American-Soviet friendship, in order to be sure of future peace and to get rid of fascism."

Being mustered out was only the first step in the Red Army man's homecoming. At his factory or wherever he worked, he met the same warm reception. Trade unions, collective farms, the Communist Party, youth and every social organization had committees to look after the demobilized, and to make sure they received whatever help they needed.

The demobilized men and women received preference in colleges and institutes. Those who had finished high school with good marks were admitted without examination. Training courses were available for any who wished to acquire higher qualifications or enter a new field. Invalids, the blind and crippled were receiving training and every assistance necessary to help them adjust to the new conditions under which they must live.

From Kozlova, a handsome woman with jet black hair, who was secretary of the Raikom (District Committee) of the Communist Party of the Stalin District of Moscow, I learned about the varied ways in which the party organizations helped the demobilized.

"First of all," Kozlova told me, "we make sure that every demobilized group is met at the train. This is easy to organize—girls like nothing better than to meet the homecoming heroes with flowers, and the factory bands vie to play for them. For those coming through Moscow en route to other parts of the country, canteens are set up, and sightseeing trips and entertainment provided during their stopover.

"Naturally, all those who live in Moscow want to go home first if they have families. Otherwise we help find places where they can be put up temporarily. Not only party members, but other citizens ask us for help. If they have already been through the demobilization center, they may come to us for advice. We try to find places for those who have special needs, or special gifts or capacities or new skills. Many who were workers at the bench became officers and so now qualify for managerial positions.

"We help look after the families of those who are still away, but our first attention goes to the families who have lost someone at the front. The big question now is improvement of living conditions and extra material aid to those who need it. The first problem is to see that the family has a provider. That sometimes means that we must give the wife the opportunity to learn a trade or profession. We visit the family, discuss their needs with them, plan with them what to do.

"The trade union and factory committees give similar aid. We also see about such things as fuel and repairs and clothing. But the main thing is to assure permanent economic security for every family. If financial help is needed this is usually taken care of through special trade union funds. It is also important to help bereaved families overcome their sorrow, to make them feel a part of the normal life of the country, to count on the love and sympathy of the larger family outside of the home."

The party supplements the work carried on through the trade unions and through the Social Security Commissariat to provide financial help through pensions and specialized training for war invalids. These are divided into three categories, which Kozlova outlined for me.

"The first group are the ones totally or almost totally disabled. These receive pensions amounting to 100 per cent of their pre-induction earnings, or more if that is not sufficient. They are the blind, those without legs or arms, or with especially severe

internal injuries. The party sees to it that certain organizations take 'patronage' over such cases. Members of these organizations go to their homes, read to them, take them to the theater and to public affairs, invite them to parties, look after them constantly, not only when they first come home, but permanently. Those who have no families are sent to an invalid home.

"Some who have come to us here had decided they were useless people, that they had given everything they could, and that now they had nothing left to live for. We cannot let them feel that; they must know how much we love and cherish them, that they have and always will have an honored place in our society. Wherever possible we try to find work even for those most severely injured. It helps their morale enormously to feel they are useful.

"The second group of our war invalids are those who can partially help themselves. Their pension is fifty per cent of their pre-war pay. We help them find work to which they are adapted. They may be able to study a new profession, or get a musical education. There is plenty of work for them all; it is mainly a question of finding what is most suitable to their condition.

"The third group, getting pensions of about 35 per cent of their former earnings, is made up of the less severely injured, whose capacity to do their former work may be impaired. We follow the same general principle in our work with this group."

Other responsibilities of party workers included assisting in the reconversion of the factories to peacetime work, new housing, educational facilities for young people who had missed their schooling during the war years, and adult recreational and cultural activities. I asked Kozlova whether the abnormal war conditions had brought on any special problems among the youth and the returning veterans.

"Do you refer to juvenile delinquency, increase in crime, sex problems, and so on?" she asked. "Naturally there is more than in peacetime. The sacrifices of the war purified our people and lifted them to higher levels, but separation from home for such long periods could not but have some bad results. Some of our children are still not well enough supervised. For them we are organizing clubs, sport circles, after-school activities.

"Of our young people as a whole, whether in the front lines or in the rear, we can say only the best and most beautiful things.

Our youth bore on their shoulders the heaviest burdens of the war. We love and cherish them for it. When those who have been at the front come back, we try to make them forget what they endured. A person freezes—he is surrounded by warmth—and everything is better again. That is the main thing—to warm our people with our love and care.”

CHAPTER III

LENINGRAD

I chose Leningrad for my first trip on the advice of the poet, Nikolay Tikhonov, who had been director of the Writers' Brigade in Leningrad during the war.

"By all means, go first to Leningrad," he suggested. "There you will learn how Leningrad's beauty became a part of its defense. An old woman told me she was crossing the Winter Palace square when there was an air raid. She threw herself face-down at the foot of the Alexander Column. Fire bombs fell around her, and when the planes had passed, she looked up and the face of the angel at the top of the column was all alight from the flames, with a look of such bright beauty and fierce vengeance that it gave her courage which she never lost all through the siege."

Tikhonov pursued the theme of beauty as an element inseparable from everything connected with Leningrad's defense.

"The people of Leningrad displayed unbelievable endurance and purity of soul. An old man, a fine jurist, knew he was dying. We found him in his best clothes, a bottle of champagne partly empty by his side, an utterly peaceful expression on his face. I had a dear friend who was a scientist. One day his cleaning woman collapsed. He put her to bed and nursed her and did her work as well as his own, because he was the stronger of the two. He shared his ration with her, and then they both died.

"We had to save Leningrad, you see," Tikhonov went on, "because everything of Russia is in Leningrad. All of Russian history is bound up with it—Peter the Great—Russia's path to the sea—the October Revolution—the Civil War days—the victory over Yudenich.

"When masses of people, the millions like those both in Leningrad and all over our country, live through such tragedies—the loss of their dear ones, the loss of everything they have built—they must be aware of why they live and why they die. It is impossible to live through such things as happened in Leningrad without faith. No one could be passive in the face of such events. Everything depended on the simple, ordinary people—the girls who stood guard on the roof, the youth in the factories. There was no need to exhort these people to be brave. Danger was so near that no agitation was necessary. Things went so deep that any sacrifice was possible. Those died first who lost the will to live. When people didn't bother to bathe or take care of their clothes that was a first step toward their destruction. We paid attention to all the little details of life, trying to live as normally as possible under those abnormal conditions.

"These simple people not only fully understood their place in the struggle, but took the greatest pride in it. There was nothing they would not do. We, of course, could never have used the harsh measures of discipline used in Germany. Nothing like that was necessary. Our people understood the need for discipline, and accepted it voluntarily.

"There was such a deep sense of close relationship among our people in those days. Here was the essence of our democracy. Each person knew that alone he could accomplish nothing, but that together everything was possible. In that sea of horror, there was so much that was good and beautiful! The little nurse who saved hundreds of wounded under fire and then was killed herself; the telephone operator who stayed at her post to the end. No one told her to, she didn't have to. But she stayed on, knowing she would be killed, reporting every movement of the enemy up to the very last moment when the tanks rode right over her.

"Our men and women, our youth, have come through the war not crippled in their souls, but enriched."

Tikhonov reached into his coat pocket and brought out a pile of photographs of Leningrad during the war. He showed me one of a section of the city lying under a heavy blanket of snow.

"Wherever you looked that winter," he remarked, "there was emptiness, purity of outline. Everything you saw was like a picture that had been painted just for you."

He leafed through the photographs—the two women pull-

ing a coffin on a sled—the girl traffic cop at the most dangerous intersection—the building that had been completely destroyed but had its facade restored to keep up morale—the nurse and doctor who shielded with their own bodies a woman giving birth during an air raid. Spring and the physical culture parade while bombers roared overhead—the football match played before a few hundred people in the huge stadium—the woman cradling a cat in her arms, unbelievable sight in starving Leningrad—the doll with a piece of shrapnel through its breast—the mutilated children lying in the street. This last one he held before me, passionately shaking it, and asking:

“Zachem? Zachem eti dieti?—Why? Why these children?”

On September 23, Ksana and I boarded the night train to Leningrad. The wonderful camaraderie of Russian trains got under way, and almost immediately we were in conversation with several Red Army officers. First a Red Army tank colonel who had met American soldiers in Europe and liked them wanted to know what Americans thought of the Russians. Soon the conversation was ranging far and wide over American life. They knew much more about prominent Americans than any group casually gathered together in an American railway car would know about the Russians. They knew about our airplane designers, our dancers, our singers, our scientists, our political figures. They spoke of Roosevelt with admiration and love. What manner of man was Truman, and what had happened to former Secretary of State Hull? They had warm praise for ex-Ambassador Davies and Henry Wallace and Senator Pepper. They knew about the Hearst-McCormick-Patterson press. They knew about William Foster and Earl Browder, and wanted to know how the latter had developed his anti-Marxist ideas. They loved American movies and were Charlie Chaplin fans. They not only knew the names of our leading actors, but of producers and directors, and remembered every plot detail of the American films they had seen.

Then they started a game of famous names. You selected a letter and the person designated had to give all the great names he could think of, in five minutes, beginning with that letter. “S” for example—Sophocles, Sappho, Sun Yat-sen, Shakespeare, Solomon, Stokowski, Shostakovich, Socrates. You had to say who they were and what they had done, what school of philosophy or

painting they founded, what they invented, and in what part of what century they lived. The great people through the centuries and throughout the world tripped from their tongues with such ease, and they knew so much about all of them that I could not keep up and fled for bed. This game plagued me everywhere. The zest and the erudition with which Soviet citizens of all kinds entered into it was a striking commentary on the general high level of cultural development.

Next morning, we rode through miles of battle zone. The bright autumn leaves that still clung to what trees and shrubbery were left could not cover the traces of devastation and death. Mile after mile of charred sticks and stumps where lovely forests of birch and pine had stood, blasted factories, whole villages of which only broken chimneys were left, the yellow gleam of new wood where shattered houses were being repaired. Battles of incredible fury had been fought for the railroad. Twisted wreckage of bridges, tanks, railway cars accompanied us all the way to the city of Leningrad.

At the Astoria Hotel two comfortable rooms with baths awaited us—and profuse apologies that there was no hot water. Leningrad's water system was not yet completely restored. A huge breakfast was brought. A maid came to take our clothes to be laundered. "The Hitlerites expected to hold their victory feast in our hotel," she told me. "They even allotted quarters for their officers. How glad we are to have American guests instead!"

I was astonished to find Leningrad in much better condition than Moscow. Leningrad had suffered incomparably greater damage, but the process of repairing and rebuilding had given it a fresher appearance than Moscow. On a closer look, you saw that not a building was without scars. Every one was peppered with shell or bullet holes. Streets still bore the signs: "Citizens! This side is more dangerous to walk on than the other. Be careful!" But no street or house had been safe in this city on which 4,638 heavy bombs, 102,520 incendiary bombs and 148,478 artillery shells had fallen. It had withstood 29 months of siege, the longest and most terrible in history. During the siege when Red Army men in from the nearby front were seen walking carelessly about the streets, the Leningraders warned them, "Careful, comrade, you are not at the front, you know!"

The historic monuments and fine public buildings were

getting new coats of paint in the softly bright colors characteristic of Leningrad. The gold leaf on the Admiralty spire, covered during the siege by two daring university students whose hobby was mountain climbing, gleamed again. The Winter Palace was ready to emerge in fresh green and white from a forest of scaffolding.

Leningrad is surely one of the world's loveliest cities. More European in style than other Russian cities, bearing as it does the stamp of Peter the Great's determination to build a "window on the west," it has acquired its own special Soviet qualities.

The skies were leaden during the whole time I was there, but I shall always think of Leningrad as a city of light, because of the radiance the city itself gives out—the classic grace and airiness of its architecture, its wide streets, its lovely monuments, its gleaming canals—but above all the shining spirit of people themselves.

THE RESTORATION OF LENINGRAD

My first visit was to the office of Baranov, chairman of the architectural section of the Leningrad Soviet. With him were several of the city's leading architects. It embarrassed me to take the time of these busy people. But they at once made me feel at ease, and countered my apologies with expressions of gratitude to the American people for our help in the war.

From them I learned about the vital role played by the city planners and architects in the defense of the city. For the defeat of the Germans and their Finnish and other allies at Leningrad was not only a military defeat. It frustrated their attempts to destroy the great Soviet city and its cultural treasures.

"The process of restoration began from the very first day Leningrad was under attack," Baranov told me. "Often, no sooner was bomb damage repaired than the same structure would be hit again. But the repairs were not a waste. They gave a tremendous lift to the morale of our people. A damaged building needs attention. Otherwise, like a living organism, its wounds will fester, the whole building will decay, especially under our harsh weather conditions. About a third of Leningrad was destroyed but if we hadn't localized it, the damage would have been far greater.

"Our historical buildings and our monuments were not only precious to us, they were a part of world history and culture, so we had a sacred obligation to preserve them. We set up a special

course in our architectural school for the study of every detail of former construction and decoration, interior and exterior, in order to restore everything important just as it had been."

A large map of Leningrad covering one wall was studded with shadowed areas representing bombed-out areas. Beside it was another chart showing the improvements planned in the reconstructed city.

"We had the entire plan, a trained staff and materials all ready the moment the blockade was lifted in 1944," said Baranov. "We began with housing and schools. This year we have done more work on such historical buildings as the Winter Palace and the Hermitage, pierced by twenty-eight shells. All its treasures were evacuated to the deep rear or hidden deep in the earth. Now they are back and it will soon reopen."

Baranov then described the principles behind Leningrad's reconstruction.

"We are taking full advantage of the destruction to introduce improvements. New squares and parks will make the city more attractive and improve its health conditions.

"When a building is of no historical significance, we alter it in rebuilding, to fit in better with the environment and the architectural ensemble, and also to improve its living conveniences.

"Under the private landlord system of tsarist Russia, they used to build large apartments of fifteen and twenty rooms, not adapted for the groups of families that had to live in them. In the rebuilding, we are making them into smaller modernized apartments. We used to have crowded tenement blocks both in the center and in the workers' suburbs. The older part of Leningrad was much too thickly built. Where a house was destroyed there, we leave the site open as a small park space.

"We are opposed to such high buildings as you have in your cities, although we admire some of your magnificent skyscrapers like the Rockefeller Center ensemble. The height of Leningrad is more or less around five stories and we want to keep it so. We believe that only buildings with some special cultural or social function have a right to rise above others; and we want them to be seen, not buried among skyscrapers.

"Our own experience has convinced us that modern cities must be not only administrative and industrial centers, but, above all, beautiful, healthful, and comfortable places to live. The ex-

ternal aspect of a city has a great influence on its population." Here Baranov echoed Tikhonov's words: "During the war the beauty of Leningrad played a great role in its defense. Our people simply could not permit even the thought of Germans' boots ever tramping the beautiful streets of our town.

"It is our belief that every town in our country must have its own physiognomy. This is achieved when the architecture is linked both with its history and traditions, and the surrounding topography—the rivers, shore, the general land contours. We are not followers of the constructivist school of architecture. We think it important to avoid monotony."

The other architects brought out their maps and plans and blueprints. In addition to Leningrad's reconstruction, they were helping in the plans to rehabilitate the Nazi-wrecked towns in the whole Leningrad Region and in Estonia.

An interesting point that came out was the present emphasis on the building of individual homes. Architects were preparing attractive plans for one or two-family houses on the outskirts of the city, which, with construction advice, were available, gratis, to the home builders. Standard elements for prefabricated houses were being designed.

Our hosts decided I must see some of the things they had been telling me about under expert guidance and architect Eugene Levinson, who spoke English fluently, undertook to show us around.

Levinson was a cultured, brilliant man. At the famous equestrian statue "The Bronze Horseman," he had us get out of the car and walk around it to appreciate it from every angle. This statue of Peter the Great on a rearing horse, on a pedestal of rough hewn rock that sustains the rhythm of the horse's motion, is especially dear to the Leningraders. It was done by a French sculptor, Maurice Falcon, who had come to Russia in 1765 at the invitation of Catherine II. The Russians take pride in his work, since it was in Russia that Falcon reached the highest fulfillment of creative art.

The statue had been carefully swathed in layers of protective covering during the blockade, and now stood free again, an ever-present symbol of the liberation of the city. The statue had been given literary immortality as well in Pushkin's poem, "The Bronze Horseman," which Leningraders love to quote:

*Now, city of Peter, stand thou fast,
Foursquare, like Russia, vaunt thy splendor
The very element shall surrender
And make her peace with thee at last.*

Levinson was in charge of the restoration of both the town and the ruined palace at Pushkin, formerly known as Tsarskoye Selo (Tsar's Village). After the Revolution, many children's institutions were established there and it was renamed Dietskoye Selo (Children's Village). When the Pushkin Centennial was celebrated in 1937, it was again renamed in honor of the poet, who had attended the Lyceum there.

"But is it really possible to restore the palace at Pushkin?" I asked Levinson, remembering pictures of its ruins.

"On this earth everything is possible!" was his quick reply. "The restoration of the palace is a very complex problem however. Its destruction was senseless barbarism. The structure had no military significance. The Gestapo and the German troops used it as a barracks, and the filth they left was up to your neck. We found playing cards and empty wine bottles from every country in Europe. The most precious objects were carried away. One entire room was found later in Koenigsburg."

Later we drove out to the palace and saw the unspeakable devastation and the painstaking restoration. Our guide, a young woman steeped in the history of the palace and of Pushkin and his times, spoke of the great poet with adoration. She showed us the Bakh statue of Pushkin in his student days, seated in a dreamy pose on an old bench of Catherine's time, at the foot of a gnarled tree. The statue was buried in the ground not far from its actual position when the Germans were approaching. An old worker who lived nearby knew its hiding place, but refused even under torture to reveal it. Inside the shattered palace the broken bits of wood and marble and gilt were neatly stacked, every piece numbered. They were still being picked up for miles around. The Germans hitched their horses to the fragile golden coaches in which Catherine rode, and clattered around in them until they fell to pieces.

The broken white pillars of the terrace carried crude scrawls in Spanish: "One of Franco's Blue Division regiments was quartered here along with the Germans," our guide told me. "They desecrated the walls with dirty verses and obscene pictures. They wanted to replace our art values with theirs!"

On another occasion we visited Peterhof, Tsar Peter's summer palace. On the road we passed five blackened skeletons of trolley cars still standing on the tracks, mute evidence of an assault by German parachute troops one summer's day when a group of mothers and children were on their way to the suburban town of Strelny.

At Peterhof only the bare shell of the palace remains, its gold and marble decorations too completely destroyed for restoration. It will be converted into a rest home for workers. The terraced fountains patterned after those at Versailles, were already in process of restoration. In the surrounding park the blasted trees were all splashed with blue, where they were being nursed back to life by the tree surgeons. In a beguiling nook we came upon a bench from Catherine's time, which had originally been fitted up so that anyone sitting in it got a shower bath—which gives an idea of the coarse humor of that time. We also saw remnants of the more grisly practical jokes of the Hitlerites who mined benches and chairs and children's toys.

THE LENINGRAD LIBRARY

Elena Phillipovna Egorenko, the director of the Leningrad Library, was thin and gaunt, with the siege indelibly stamped on her lined though still young face. Like all Leningraders, she radiated an inner fire and could still laugh merrily.

"This is one of the oldest libraries in the Soviet Union," Elena Phillipovna told me. "It was founded in 1795, during the reign of Catherine II. Conceived from the beginning as a public library, it is often properly called our national pride."

How often I heard this expression in Leningrad—of a statue, a museum, or a factory!

The growth of the library had greatly accelerated in Soviet times. In 1917, it had 3,000,000 books—now, 9,500,000. Its organization is similar to that of our Library of Congress, and a constant exchange is carried on between the two institutions. It has a full catalogue of all the books in the Washington library, as the latter has of theirs.

Elena Phillipovna's special pride was their Library Workers Training Institute, started after the Revolution. Its three-year post-graduate course trains its own staff and personnel for other librar-

ies. The students do practical library work while continuing their studies and receive a stipend.

The many branches of the library included a collective farm library at Dubrovno, completely destroyed by the Germans and now being re-established. Before the war there were 61 factory club libraries which received their services. During the war, twelve were kept going.

"Giving service to the people is the main thing," Elena Phillipovna said. "Our library is open every day from nine to midnight. Before the war we averaged about 3,000 readers a day. Now with 2,800 we have already reached the pre-war level, even though of Leningrad's pre-war population of 3,500,000 there are now only about 1,300,000. Our people are hurrying to make up for all they lost. During the whole siege, our work never stopped, even for a day. As soon as the war started, books were carried down from the second story to the first. When the air attacks began a little library was set up in the bomb shelter to make it possible for teachers and students to continue their work. In January 1942, first the water system, then the heating system stopped operating. Then the lights went out. For all those years we had to do our work with 'Bat' lanterns and candles; there was no fuel even for lamps. We closed the big rooms; readers worked in smaller rooms where the cold could be tempered by the small wood-burning stoves we call the 'bourjooika'—because of their pot bellies!"

I asked her what kind of work it had been possible to keep going under those conditions. "We did all we could to serve the general readers. Most of the colleges and institutes were evacuated, but the first and second Medical Institutes, the Pediatrics Institute and other technical institutes remained. We served their students. During 1943, 123 schools were open, with 35,753 pupils. A group from the Academy of Sciences carried on their research here. During 1943 and 1944, 61 scientific institutes remained at work.

"We also had a part to play in the defense of Leningrad. Our military section supplied books to the tactical staff of our defenders. With our medical books, we helped the medical corps. Our research helped in the construction of an underground hospital, and in devising substitutes for food, fuel, and other essentials. When Leningrad's candle supply gave out, candles were made according to a formula we found in ancient books. We went back to the sixteenth century but even they had more materials than

we had, so we had to go back to the tenth century and only in those times could we find a formula for which we had sufficient materials.

"We even managed to continue with some of our bibliographic work during the blockade. Our Slavonic Bibliography and the one on Leningrad in the War were begun at that time. With our help scholars carried on their work. One scientist wrote on Russian psychological literature during the first half of the nineteenth century.

"We suffered in the bombardments. Seven shells hit the main building. Many of our workers died of bombs or hunger. Our staff is only half as large as it used to be. A hundred and three of us lived at the library in order to protect it. I lived right in this room. My husband was at the front, and I sent my daughter away to stay with my mother in the rear. In the worst days, our only food was 125 grams of bread. From 170 pounds I went down to a hundred—now I'm up to 115!

"But it's over—that's the main thing. It was terrible but there was so much beauty here! Such friendship and love! We simply knew that the Germans would never set foot on our city. That conviction, the sure knowledge of victory, sustained us. We found ways to keep our minds off our gnawing stomachs. One was a bibliography quiz game: Who was the first publisher of Pushkin outside of the U.S.S.R.; who was the first to translate *War and Peace* in Western Europe—questions like that. Plays, concerts, ballets, musical comedies went on all the time. We would go, the bombardment would begin, we would rush back to protect the library—return to the theater—again the bombardment—again the rush back! I went to one play three times, but never saw more than the first two acts.

"We observed all our national holidays. On May 1, November 7, and others, we pooled everything we had—light, heat, food—and danced and sang. From the collective we draw strength—and the siege proved and tested that strength. A person of eighteen takes life more easily than a person of forty, because so many experiences are still fresh and exciting. During the siege we grew younger, though our hair turned gray. Today we take a good meal as a matter of course. But during the blockade a bit of extra food became an event. Every smallest thing was greeted by us with the joy of a young person experiencing something new. Such a small

matter as the way you feel after an air raid and you are still whole, and may go quietly to sleep!

"When at last the siege was lifted, my first thought was the simple one—now I can go to bed and sleep the whole night through knowing that tomorrow I will get up again!"

She called in Vladimir Sergeyevich Liublinsky, director of the Bibliography Department and curator of incunabula. Thin and dried up as a last season's milkweed pod, he too burned with love for his incunabula, his work, his library, his city, his people. Winter had come early and the building, still bearing marks of the siege, was cold and damp. People worked in heavy coats.

As we went the rounds of the great book-lined rooms, Vladimir Sergeyevich would pick out a volume, handle it lovingly, and talk eloquently about it. He showed us the immense files of newspapers, sorted and classified, from all the many nationalities of the U.S.S.R.

A titanic task still confronted the staff just in getting the library in order again. Now that they were expecting the evacuated books, they were in despair as to where to put them. Vladimir Sergeyevich showed me the shelves from which they had been taken: "Bookshelves, like nature, abhor a vacuum," he said. "All these new books have grown in their places."

When we finally reached Liublinsky's own department, he explained that his most precious things had been shipped away. He was now awaiting their return as though they were long lost children. With zest he showed me his manuscripts, his ancient books and prints, exquisitely illuminated fifteenth-century items, signatures of the great dead on little mouldy slips of paper. He took particular pride in a letter written by Napoleon from Moscow on October 3, 1812, to General Kutuzov, the Russian Commander-in-Chief. The letter, taken to Kutuzov by Lauriston, proposed the discussion of peace. They had found out about its existence by chance and the owner had been glad to sell it for a few hundred rubles.

In their foreign periodicals department, I noticed a display of American magazines, mostly scientific, medical, and technical. These dated back to February and March 1945. The head of the department complained that they did not receive nearly enough American periodicals, and wanted to know how they could receive them more promptly.

LENINGRAD UNIVERSITY

We waited for the president of the Leningrad University, Alexander Voznesensky, to receive us, in the room where Lenin took his final government exams, where records of his student days are on display. Presently we were ushered in to the pleasant but somewhat chilly office of the president. The handsome, white-haired Voznesensky was genial and patient, though this was a busy time for him—the beginning of the school year. He called in several faculty members, then began telling us something of the history of the university:

“In 1725, Peter ordered an Academy of Sciences to be organized and a university as part of it. He died that year but the university was established the following year. During the 'seventies and 'eighties Lomonossov, founder of Russian science, was director. Some of the greatest figures in Russian science and culture, known throughout the world, have taught here—Mendeleyev, the mathematician Tchebyshov, the physiologist Sechenov, whose work was carried on by Pavlov, the chemist Butlerov, the zoologist Kabalevsky, and others. Gogol gave a course in history here—although I must say he was more successful as a writer than as a history teacher! Turgenev and Pushkin were students here.

“The university went through the first eight months of the siege—that first terrible winter of 1941-42—here in Leningrad. It is hard to think about it now. We were frozen and hungry; many near and dear to us died. By August 1941, the Germans had the city surrounded. The only route open between us and the outside world was across Lake Ladoga.

On September first, though it was not necessary for all the professors to be on hand, practically all of them appeared. It was no ordinary day—the opening of our university under such circumstances. The days that followed were full of drama and tragedy for all of us.

“Day after day more students went off to the front. Those stationed nearby took a day's furlough to defend their theses and receive their diplomas. Our scientific workers put out 130 pieces of scientific work directly connected with war problems. By December there was no electric light, no heat, no water and almost no food.

“Professor Tronsky here was interrupted three times by air

raids while he was delivering his dissertation. When the bombs fell our chairs swayed like rockers. You no doubt feel cold here—perhaps you can imagine what it is like with the thermometer thirty below zero, and most of the windows broken. We sat here in our warmest coats, our hats and gloves, and still our fingers froze. Ink turned to ice. One of our military men read his dissertation on how to build the road across Lake Ladoga—the road that was to become Leningrad's Road to Life—here in this very room.”

Dr. Voznesensky indicated a bouquet of flowers in the center of the long table around which we were sitting.

“We all look at those flowers with a special tenderness today,” he said. “Forty tons of coal were allotted to us, not enough to go around. We held a meeting to consider what to do with it. We decided it would do the most good in our greenhouse. We managed to save most of our plants. We did not begrudge it.

“There was a time when the university corridor and courtyard were full of corpses every morning. People had to take their own dead to the cemetery, and the university is on the way. Often, with no strength to go further, they would leave the bodies here, knowing that somehow the university would get them buried. But we ourselves had only one car left and no gasoline.

“Throughout November, December, and January when I came to work in the morning, trembling shadows would grab me and beg me for food. There was nothing we could do; we had the same rations as other civilians, and many of our own comrades were dying of hunger. We organized a hospital here at the university for our weakest comrades and tried to feed them a little better than the others. We took out corpses from the hospital every night. In one night alone, twelve of our people died.

“Then on January 1, 1942, the government established special rations for scientists. It was a regular feast of Lucullus when we first received them! The ration included three kilograms of meat, a kilo of butter, a kilo of sugar, two or three kilos of grits—this saved the lives of many of our comrades.

“Both professors and students were on constant guard on our roof against incendiary bombs. How fearlessly our young girl students climbed the highest cupola of the university! In December 1941, a fascist bomb fell directly on one of the students' dormitories. Fifty-six of our students were killed and seventy were wounded. A student of our socio-economics faculty was buried

in the ruins for three days before she could be dug out. By a miracle she was still alive. She was lying over a dead comrade whose body cushioned her. She was unconscious. When she came to in the hospital, she wanted to get right up and go to work.

" 'Here I am born a second time,' she said, 'and you stick me in a hospital!' She simply refused to stay there.

"But the time came when it was impossible for the university to keep on functioning. The cost in human life was too great. So in March 1942, we were evacuated to Saratov. The only time during the war we stopped working was during the two weeks traveling there and back.

"When we came back again in the spring of 1944, a big job awaited us. We have 28 buildings and all were badly damaged. Faculty members and students took part in the restoration, doing heavy labor. Twenty thousand square meters of glass had to be replaced; 45,000 square meters of plastering had to be done; 150,000 square meters of carpentry work.

"Last year the university resumed regular work, though conditions continued to be difficult. We did not have enough fuel. The water system was not in order; we were understaffed in every way—so many had died, so many were at the front. We have always had very high standards in our university—and our students upheld this tradition with continued high grades.

"At the present time we have almost 6,000 students enrolled, more than we are equipped to handle. Before the war, we had 4,800 to 5,000. During the war years, only 15 per cent of our student body were men. Now the percentage has reached 25-30 per cent. With the new demobilization there will be still more.

"This year when we opened for our first semester on September 17, three thousand new students stormed our doors—but we could only accept 1700."

All the professors do a great deal of lecturing outside of the university, in other cities and at collective farms. During 1944-45, the university sponsored a lecture cycle devoted to the United States. After the death of President Roosevelt, a program on his life and role in world affairs was attended by an overflow crowd.

"Those lectures," said Voznesensky, "had a special warmth as a result of the tremendous help we received from America in the war."

Among the professors who joined us was Professor Alexeyev of the philological faculty, who was initiating a course on American culture, divided into the following sections: (1) Contemporary American Linguistics; (2) Problems of American Speech; (3) Modern American Music; (4) Modern American Cinema; (5) Study of American Literature in Russia. Professor Zhermundsky of the Western Literature Department told us that the Institute of World Literature of the Academy of Sciences was publishing a three-volume work on American literature.

Leningrad University has twelve faculties. In its philological faculty, over forty different languages were being studied. "Young girls from the village come here to study Chinese," Professor Alexeyev told me. "We have a collective farm woman studying Arabic."

When I asked Dr. Voznesensky about their teaching methods he told me, "Attendance at regular lectures is required but everything possible is done to encourage independent work by the students. The seminar method is widely used. In addition there are more than forty scientific circles of student experimenters.

"Our aim is to give our students a well-rounded, many-sided education. We see to it that those students who specialize in physics or chemistry also have a knowledge of literature and art; and that the students who specialize in literature and the humanities also have a minimum of scientific and technical knowledge which every human being should have.

"With peace, most of our young people are eager to study again. I am flooded with applications. We were over our quota in philosophy and had turned down the applications of two students when a letter arrived from them begging me to find a place for them 'because we have dreamed about philosophy from the day of our birth!' It isn't possible to resist such enthusiasm, even though somewhat overstated—I'll make room for them somehow!"

THE KIROV FACTORY

My Leningrad hosts were so proud of the rich culture of their city that they wanted to show me everything connected with it. When I objected to the emphasis on culture and asked to see more of the life of the workers, Tamara of Intourist remonstrated: "We don't make any such separation between culture and life.

We are proud of our culture because it is part of the life of our people. Leningrad is above all a workers' city—it was the cradle of our Revolution. You've been to the library—what is the library for, if not to serve our workers? You've been to the university—who makes up its student body? Our workers and children of workers. You've been to our theater and ballet—whom did you see in the audience, if not our people, our workers? And not only the audience—the people who act and dance—some started as factory workers. In our country we honor all labor—whether working at a factory bench or dancing. We don't make sharp distinctions between mental and manual labor. Just because a man works with his hands is no reason why he should not have every chance to develop his mind too. . . .”

Having delivered herself somewhat sternly of this lecture, Tamara made arrangements for us to visit the Kirov plant.

Driving out to the plant, we passed through a desolation which had once been a town of 60,000 workers and their families. What the bombs had left had been used as firewood.

The partly wrecked plant, which had been three times decorated for its war-time labor, still looked like the battleground it had been. This was the former Putilov factory. It had been renamed in honor of Sergei N. Kirov, the beloved Leningrad leader. A victim of the Trotskyite conspirators, he was assassinated in 1935 as the first move in their plot to murder Soviet leaders and seize power with the help of fascist intervention.

The plant director, Col. Alexander Kizima, told me that it had been founded 148 years before, one of the first big metallurgical plants in Russia. By 1940 it had developed into a big machine-building “combinat” with a production amounting to 400,000,000 rubles—250 times greater than in pre-revolutionary days, and with 20,000 workers. When the war started, they converted from tractor to tank production, and made artillery and other war material. Before the Germans closed in on Leningrad, the best workers and equipment were evacuated to the Urals, where, under Colonel Kizima's direction, they set up a new plant and passed on their skill and mass production methods to local workers. Some of their machinery and workers were left behind to continue to make ammunition and repair tanks. The German ring tightened, the front came nearer, but they kept right on working. The Germans were only three and a half miles away, the factory itself became

part of the front—but the workers stayed at their machines. By that time about 80 per cent of them were women, many girls in their teens. Nine thousand five hundred shells landed on the factory grounds; two hundred heavy bombs hit the factory. Here alone 1,386 workers perished, 758 from wounds, the rest from hunger. “We often had ten or twelve artillery bombardments a day,” Assistant Director Georgi Itonyev told me. “And yet these young girls worked on at their machines, sometimes beside the dead bodies of their comrades. Every worker, man or woman, was ready, if the enemy broke through, to operate our own artillery and machine guns.”

At the time of my visit, upwards of 13,000 workers were employed at the plant. Some of the evacuated machinery was being brought back and some machinery was coming in from Germany as reparations, but they were still far from their normal equipment. About half of the workers evacuated to the Urals were expected to remain there. Badly as they were needed, the workers could not be called back all at once because of the housing shortage. Those with families in Leningrad were the first to return.

The factory was turning out fifty per cent of its pre-war output of steel. Present machine production was chiefly for the reconstruction of Leningrad. Within a few months they were to start work on turbines for Leningrad's electrical station, equipment for a new gasification project, special wide-tread tractors to work in swamp lands, excavators and agricultural machinery.

“When our rations were slimmest,” Itonyev told me, “we somehow managed to feed our workers three times a day. The workers got 250 grams of bread a day, when others were getting half that much. Otherwise they could not have kept going.”

Attempting to converse with the workers as we went through the plant was something of a strain amid the clatter of machinery; and while they were glad to see an American, they did not particularly relish interruption. Among them were some who had worked in the plant forty-five years, retired, and then voluntarily returned to work. One proudly recalled that he had had Kalinin as a shopmate. Several women gathered around me, and asked if American women had worked and fought as they had during the war. I asked whether with the men coming back, they would continue to do such heavy work. An older woman spoke up:

“Many of our men are never coming back. My own husband

was killed at the front—and hers—and hers,” pointing to some of the others. “My son was killed too. Why shouldn’t we keep on working? But the young ones here, they will go back to school.”

Some of the German prisoners of war were pointed out to me. “We have more than 900 Germans working here,” Itonyev told me. “Some who were shelling us a year and a half ago are rebuilding what they destroyed.”

I inquired how they worked. He shrugged his shoulders.

“Indifferently, some better than others. Most are doing reconstruction work, carpentry, bricklaying, etc. Among them are twelve construction engineers. They are working with our engineers, carefully watched, of course. One is testing an invention he started in Germany.”

“Is there any understanding among them of what they have done?” I asked.

“Just this morning one of the soldiers from the P.O.W. camp came to me and asked that the officers be made to work. He said that as soldiers, of course, their officers could command them but if the officers became workers too, they would no longer have that right. This may represent a first awakening. They all receive wages, and the same rations as our army men. Those who work well receive a 25 per cent bonus. We have special categories of pay for the more skilled workers. The money goes to their commandant who banks it for them. They all receive medical care at the factory polyclinic, the same as our own workers. They arrange their living conditions as they like, the more educated ones choosing to live together. We do not interfere.”

“Do you ever have any trouble with them?” I asked.

“A few days ago one of the prisoners attempted to escape. His own fellow prisoners caught him and brought him back. They told him the Soviet government was taking good care of them and there was no need to spoil things for the rest by the behavior of one.”

Before I left, I was taken to see the workers’ club, a big, well-equipped building which had miraculously escaped serious damage. A sign outside announced Deanna Durbin in “His Butler’s Sister.” It was a hit. The last American picture was “In Old Chicago.” They show pictures every weekday night, unless the stage is needed for a theatrical performance, and have six showings on Sunday.

The club contained lecture rooms, laboratories, a concert and dance hall, rooms for chess and other games, and a library of 85,000 books. Among the English and American authors whose books I found there, in the original or translated, were J. B. Priestley, H. G. Wells, Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Richard Wright, John Steinbeck, Erskine Caldwell, Ernest Hemingway, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Upton Sinclair, and O. Henry. The children's section contained 10,000 books. I noticed an excited group of workers' children before a group of silhouetted scenes from "Eugene Onyegin." They had been to a children's matinee performance of the opera, and the librarian had organized a quiz game in which the children identified the scene and the actors.

ROLE OF A SOVIET NEWSPAPER

At the office of the *Leningrad Pravda*, organ of Leningrad's Communist Party, I was received by Alexander Vassiliev, associate editor, Gregory Melitsev of the city desk, Olga Smirnova, of the party department, and Captain Piotr Pavlov, of the cultural department.

"In spite of the difficult conditions during the siege," Vassiliev told me, "the paper came out regularly, serving both the people in the city and the front. Our pre-war circulation was 450,000. During the war we kept it at about 200,000. Today the paper shortage keeps it down to 250,000.

"Our war role began with a crusade to induce all our industries to make ammunition. Hundreds of thousands of Leningraders responded and went into munitions making. We made it our job to explain wartime difficulties and keep up morale. Members of our staff went out with volunteers building fortifications to get out a special edition for them.

"During one of the bombardments we were hit directly. Our paper was already on the press and everything was all scrambled up. Even so, we brought out a two-page edition. Sometimes we had to do all our work in the bomb shelter.

"The only day we didn't come out was on January first, 1942, because there was no electric power that day. Electric power was limited all during the siege. Whatever there was went first to the municipal bakeries, second to the press.

"All through the winter of 1941-42, snow and ice piled up. There was no way of clearing the streets. We had to get our water from the river. Even for Leningraders, that winter was extra cold. In the spring thaw, clearing the city's streets became a major problem. The city's health was at stake, epidemics might break out from the unburied bodies. Cleaning could not be done by ordinary methods, there were no street cleaners. The Leningrad Soviet called on the people of the city to help. After that terrible winter of bombardment and hunger, people were only beginning to get back their strength. Many could not leave their beds. But everyone who could walk took part—300,000 Leningraders. We helped organize this campaign, and every worker on our staff joined the clean-up squads. People used kitchen pots, wash basins, anything they could lay their hands on.

"All during the blockade, Leningrad was hungry," Vassiliev went on. Olga Smirnova interpolated: "You said that too softly, Alexander Mikhailovich—have you forgotten?"

"No, no—I haven't forgotten. That first spring the question arose as to how the Leningraders could get more food. We initiated a campaign to make use of every inch of land—yards, parks, sport fields. Agricultural experts prepared articles on how to cultivate the land, how to care for vegetables, how to harvest them. We had a 'Gardener's Corner,' where questions were answered. We became a regular farm journal!

"In addition to war news, we reported on science and culture. We always published jokes and cartoons—that was important for the morale."

I asked what were the main concerns of the newspaper now that the war was over. Melitsev of the city desk answered:

"Our foremost task today is to restore the homes, the water supply, the factories, stores, theaters. The first part of this year we were a little behind in our plans. Gregory Belayev, a Stakhanovite bricklayer, and his crew of four women, working on the restoration of Apartment House No. 68 on the Nevsky Prospekt, were hitting such a pace that passers-by saw the walls growing back in place before their eyes. We printed a letter from him, challenging other workers to a competition, and ran an editorial backing him up. The very next day, construction workers appeared asking for jobs. Letters poured in and new records are being made constantly. In this particular campaign, we are appealing especial-

ly to professional building workers. But we also call for volunteer help from others. Sixty thousand shell holes were repaired by workers giving time after their regular hours."

"The people of Leningrad look upon this newspaper as their own," volunteered Smirnova. "They can take up any questions that concern them. We get two or three thousand letters a month—and we don't let a single one go unanswered—that's a strict rule. A special department checks on these letters. Letters are often followed up by a visit to see whether a complaint is justified. We publish as many as we have space for. Some are passed on to other organizations to handle. The name of the writer is kept confidential unless we have his permission to make it public. Most of the letters are critical of some enterprise that isn't working well, some director considered bureaucratic, some department of the City Soviet that isn't functioning properly. A letter complaining of lags in reconstruction was illustrated by a cartoon of a woman standing at her stove cooking, holding an umbrella to protect her from a dripping ceiling. A director named Lapirev, in charge of construction work in one of Leningrad's districts, had received gifts to distribute to his best construction workers. A letter revealed that he had kept most of them. Investigation confirmed the charge and Lapirev was removed."

We ended up with a discussion of the differences between their papers and ours. The Soviet journalists could not understand the sensationalism, gossip, horror stories, and so on, found in the American press.

LENINGRAD'S WRITERS

The Leningrad Writers' Union invited me to a reception at their attractive clubhouse on the Neva. The poet Aleksander Prokofiev, president of the Leningrad writers, presided at a long table in their Gothic room with beautifully carved walls and furniture. The writers present asked about our magazine and about American writers and how to renew closer contacts with them. They told me of their work during the siege, of their efforts to keep up morale, of their comrades who had died. As with other Leningraders, though they spoke of dreadful things, they spoke of the beauty of those days, the beauty of their city and the beauty of the human heart which had transcended all horror.

Then Olga Bergholtz, lovely poetess with pale golden hair, said: "We would like our fellow writers in America to know something about that first terrible winter. When we think of those days, we think of this very house, where we lived through so much together. None of our writers stopped work during the siege, and much of our work was done right here. Bombs fell in the Neva, sending waves over our heads as we sat here. ("And fish," interpolated the rather saturnine-looking Zoshchenko.)

"During the worst period of our hunger, we pooled our scanty rations and tried to keep some sort of restaurant going. Vera Ketlinskaya, our secretary during the war, lived in this room, sometimes it was a regular dormitory. We had no heat, no water, no light except home-made candles—one or two had to do for the whole house.

"We all met here on the last day of 1941. Many of our comrades had already died, some had collapsed of hunger just as they sat down to eat. But we felt the New Year would bring something different. We set the table with snowy linen, our best silver and glasses. We brought out a few bottles of champagne we had saved, used empty bottles as holders for two candles we had hoarded for the occasion. We laid our plates of hard macaroni—that was all we had to eat—we called it 'no pasaran.' We gathered at five o'clock, because by midnight everyone not living here had to be at home. We kept on our hats and coats and gloves. We read our latest poems to each other, toasted the New Year, vowed the Germans would never set foot in our beloved city.

"When this district seemed too dangerous, we transferred our *Dom Pisatelya* (House of Writers) to another place which had a big bomb shelter. It was a low house, and we called it our '*nedoscreb*' (meaning nonscraper), instead of '*neboscreb*' (sky-scraper). After a bombardment, we never knew whether we dared go out on the street or not; they were so incessant one was usually followed by another. Once I was walking along with Evgeni Schwartz to broadcast a skit we had written together in the shelter. We had just been through one bombardment and another began. It was as far to go back as to go on. I was in a terrible state of nerves. Suddenly Schwartz shouted at me, 'Why don't you walk on the right side of me instead of the left, that's the side the shells are coming from and if you stay there I'll be killed

first, but if you are on my right side, you will be killed first and maybe I'll be saved.' I was furious and gave him a terrific argument about how brutal he was to want a woman to be killed first. He was very smart. He knew if he could make me mad it would take my mind off the danger.

"During the most terrible days we kept on doing satirical radio skits, writing 'optimistic comedies' instead of tragedies, because that seemed to be the best way we could help. But one of them, written by Schwarz and Zoshchenko, *Unter den Linden* was too optimistic. At that very moment the Germans were attacking most fiercely and people were being moved from the outskirts of the city into the center. That play was taken off."

The poet, Vissarion Sayonov, then editor of Leningrad's literary magazine, *Znamya*, got up to toast American-Soviet friendship. Just back from Berlin, he was still in his Red Army uniform.

"We love and respect the American people," he declared, "for two qualities that are common to both our peoples—realism and democracy.

"I was with the Red Army detachment who happened to meet our American allies on the Bridge at Torgau. The American soldiers came rushing over to our side—the two armies of two great peoples came together.

"We have lived through many terrible experiences in this war. But that is not important—what mattered was our victory and the strength of our people. We want the Americans to understand that strength. There were many Red Army soldiers who covered machine guns with their own breasts. They were simple Russian people, people who wished only to conquer the enemy, to conquer the lie that any race is superior to any other on this earth. I saw one who did this—one of our Baltic sailors, our 'Sea Infantry'—the Germans called them 'Black Devils.' His breast was so thickly sown with machine gun bullets we could hardly lift him. Now lead is a close neighbor to uranium—I know that because I once wanted to become a scientist—and that leads me to the subject of atomic energy. We hear a great deal today about releasing the energy in the heart of the atom. But I think there was even greater energy in the heart of this simple sailor from the Baltic Fleet. You remember how Mayakovsky said, 'I give my body to time to break.' This Baltic sailor gave his heart and his body to the enemy to break. The strength of the human heart is greater than any other force

on earth. If we combine the strength of the American people with the strength of our people and the strength of the common people everywhere, and if we can combine the wisdom of our minds and use atomic energy to build a more beautiful world than we have ever dreamed of—why there is no power on the earth that could ever threaten us again. Will you take this message back to the American people? Can you make them understand this?”

Sayanov was due to attend a meeting in the same building and asked me to come along. A smallish room was jammed with several hundred people, chiefly the readers of the magazine, *Znamya*. They were hauling the editors of the magazine over the coals. The chief complaint was that in recent months they had published little beside historical material, critical articles on writers of the past, and so on—almost nothing that reflected current Soviet problems. The editors admitted this, said they themselves had already considered the matter, and would certainly heed the wishes of their readers. I had to rush away to another engagement, but I heard enough to learn with what complete freedom the readers expressed their dissatisfaction.

After my return to America, I was to regret deeply that I had not stayed through the whole discussion, since later some of these very writers were officially taken to task for neglecting problems of the day. This was interpreted in some quarters as an edict handed down from above, as evidence of compulsion on writers to toe the party line. From the glimpse I had of this meeting, I knew that the criticisms arose spontaneously among the people themselves.

MAYOR POPKOV OF LENINGRAD

On the morning of my final day in Leningrad, I received word that Mayor Popkov could see me at three o'clock that afternoon, but would have to leave by 3:45 to entrain for Moscow.

Mayor Popkov received me in his temporary offices in historic Smolny, one-time school for the daughters of the nobility, which became the birthplace of the Revolution. There, on November 8, 1917, at the first Congress of Soviets, Lenin uttered the immortal words, “Comrades, we shall now proceed to construct the socialist order!”

The tall, attractive, youthful commandant of Smolny led

us up the brick walk, through the halls where Lenin had paced so often, talking to workers and farmers from all over the country, giving them advice, but mainly listening, drawing from them much of the wisdom and the strength which went into the building of the new society.

The Mayor's office had the Lenin-like simplicity one felt in the whole building. Mayor Popkov is a smallish, dark, simple, direct and friendly man, looking very much like an ordinary worker, which, indeed, he was before he became the head of the Soviet Union's second city. (He has since become head of the Leningrad Communist Party.) He is the kind of person who puts you at your ease at once. He answered my questions frankly and fully, not at all like a man about to catch a train.

The Leningrad Soviet had served during the war, said Popkov, as "the general staff of the unity of the whole people," a unity that derived from their steadfast conviction in victory and the passionate love of all Leningraders for their city.

"Let me give you just one example of that unity," he said. "When the Germans reached Luga, we decided to encircle it with fortifications. We needed thousands of people right away. The Leningrad Soviet called for volunteers. Within two days, we had 300,000 men, women, and youths. Women who had never done any physical labor stood in the icy winds, digging into frozen ground. I asked a woman who had filled her apron with earth why she was carrying it that way when others were using wheelbarrows. She showed me her frozen hands. She refused to go until the work was finished. That sort of courage and determination was a mass phenomenon."

Between December 1941 and the spring of 1942, they had evacuated 600,000 people from the city, mainly children and old people. The plan was to leave only the strongest behind—those who could carry or make arms, those who could nurse, those who served in essential branches of the municipal economy, those who could help defend the city in any way at all. Many who were entitled to be evacuated refused to go.

"What Leningrader can ever forget," said Popkov, "the day when the Germans all but closed the iron ring around us, and the road across Lake Ladoga became our only hope of survival? On December 24, 1941, the first 200 of 4,500 horses from the 'big land,' as we called the rest of the country, crossed Lake Ladoga,

bringing supplies. The German bombers came over, but 150 got across, then we tried the rest. On the twenty-sixth the first trucks crossed the road. With the grain they brought we increased the bread ration on January 1, by three ounces per person—and Leningrad was saved. But 650,000 of our people died from hunger alone.”

“One thing I must add,” he went on. “Our people accepted all the hardships not from compulsion, but voluntarily, with full understanding of what they fought for. You know, we lived very well in our beautiful city before the war. To give up that good life and become slaves—that was an idea that our people could never submit to.”

Our discussion turned to the nature of Soviet democracy. I told him that this was one of the aspects of Soviet society least understood in America where the existence of only one party was in itself considered a negation of democracy.

“It is difficult for us to understand why Americans should not consider our country democratic,” he said. “From what we know of American democracy, we consider that our democracy is broader than yours. In your country ordinarily two parties put up candidates. But actually, do those two parties really represent the interests of all the people? Since in our country we do not have classes with conflicting interests, our people do not feel the need of having different political parties. At the same time, our constitution provides that all the organized groups of our people can nominate candidates both to their local and national Soviets, so that the interests of all will be represented. Not only the Communist Party puts up candidates, but trade unions, cultural groups, youth organizations, scientific bodies, co-operative associations. A big factory can put a candidate—a collective farm, a university, or any other organization of our people.”

“But what bothers a great many Americans,” I told him, “is that there is only one candidate on the ballot. They conclude that the right of different organizations to put up candidates is a formality, that the Communist Party simply decides who it wants for candidates in any organization and the people really have no voice.”

Popkov nodded understandingly: “I am afraid Americans do not have a very clear idea of the role of the Communist Party. The people do not look upon it as something apart from them, imposing its will from above, but as an organization providing

leadership in reaching the goals they themselves desire. Party and non-party people work very closely together, and in our election campaigns the party tries to promote the candidacy of as many non-party people as possible. Our elections are not just a one-day affair. They are part of the continuing process of our democracy through which all the people have a chance to participate in making decisions about everything that affects their lives. Take our Leningrad Soviet. Before the war there were 1,061 deputies, both party and non-party people, democratically elected by the people of Leningrad. The city is divided into election districts each of which puts up its own candidates. Final candidates were chosen only after long, thorough discussions in which everyone had a chance to participate. First the separate organizations meet to select their candidate. Many names are brought up and discussed. Anyone can nominate a candidate from the floor. And everyone, including the nominee, has a chance to talk. These are people well known to each other, familiar with each other's work; they know who will best represent their interests. The candidate selected is the one who has won the majority vote. After that, a general meeting is held in that election district, where delegates from different organizations present their candidates. Again the nominees are discussed. If the discussion casts doubts on the capabilities of the nominee, he himself may withdraw, or the delegates may decide to withdraw his name. But if agreement is not reached on one candidate, there may be two or more names on the ballot, and sometimes this happens. I have been describing elections to the Leningrad Soviet, but the process is the same in elections for the Supreme Soviet.

"In our last elections 99 per cent of our voters turned out. No one can compel citizens to vote for anyone not satisfactory to them. The voting is secret and anyone may cross out the name on the list and write in another. If any candidate fails to get a majority of the votes, provision is made for a new candidate to be nominated, and a new election is held. That usually does not happen because in the full and free discussions beforehand anyone who did not have the confidence of the majority of the voters would be eliminated. Unanimity is reached in the course of democratic discussion, and the final balloting simply registers what has already been achieved."

"That's just what is confusing to most Americans," I tried

to explain. "They feel that such unanimity could only be achieved by some kind of compulsion."

"Perhaps what Americans do not understand," the Mayor replied, "is that this unanimity is also part of a continuing process. They are people working together constantly on common problems, as a collective group. They are not people with different interests coming together just at election time. In the process of their work they find out who among them are best fitted for certain jobs. The candidates know they will only continue to hold office as long as they serve the interests of the people, the people who nominate them know very well that they don't have to keep anyone in office who does not represent their interests.

"Our Soviet deputies are all people who have regular jobs, they are in direct touch in their day-to-day work with the people who elected them. The deputies must be accessible to their constituents at all times. They have regular visiting hours when people can bring their problems. The deputy must defend the interests of his constituents before the City Soviet as a whole. He must report periodically to his constituents on his stewardship. Anyone who doesn't work well will certainly not be renominated. And if he works badly, he can be recalled. This happened in two cases during the war."

I asked Popkov to describe such a recall.

"If the voters are dissatisfied, they may call a meeting and demand the deputy's recall. They, themselves, decide on whom they want to replace him, and send in the name of their candidate to the City Soviet. If such a decision is made by a representative group of electors, the City Soviet is obligated to carry out their decision—that's all there is to it."

I noticed that the clock was approaching a quarter of four.

"Oh, that's quite all right, I have plenty of time," Popkov reassured me. "It's true I'm busy—but it's so important that your country and mine should understand each other better. If you have more questions, please ask them."

I asked if he would complete the picture by telling me more about the actual functioning of the City Soviet.

"After the deputies are elected," Popkov explained, "they elect their executive committee of twenty-two members, the chairman and his assistants, and the remaining officers. The officials of the Soviet are responsible to the deputies as a whole. We cannot

act arbitrarily. My own assistants must be selected by the deputies and they, not I, decide whether they do their work properly. For example, I had five different assistants during the war, elected by the deputies. But the members were not satisfied with their work, and chose others. The Soviet officials must receive any deputy at any time on any question. We often get very sharp criticism. We must answer to the people for every action we take and for every kopek we spend. They are very strict with us.

"I, for example, cannot make budget decisions alone. I must draw in all the members of the Soviet to help decide how much shall go to restoration, how much to schools, how much to roads, how many doctors we should have. I have the right to use the city's money for any of these special purposes only when authorized by sessions of the City Soviet as a whole."

"I have heard that citizens who are not deputies also take part in the work of the Soviet—how is that done?" I asked.

"Standing commissions are organized in different departments—health, education, trade, construction, etc. We have say fifteen deputies on each such commission. They call in specialists to serve as advisers.

"Suppose a question should arise about the work of our stores. The customers, for example, complain of poor service. The trade section meets to consider the complaints. Store managers are invited to attend, as well as customers; the question is aired and decisions are made on how to improve the service of the stores. But the matter is not dropped there. It is necessary to check up to see whether the decisions are followed and whether they solve the problem. Volunteers in the districts where the stores are located check up. Sometimes they work only on one case; sometimes they become permanently attached to a commission, as its *activ*. Similarly, if complaints come up about our school system, both teachers and parents are called to the education section to help solve the difficulty, and those who are most active and helpful become permanent workers in that section."

Mayor Popkov had given me twice the time he had promised, so I rose to go.

"Before you leave," he said, "there is something I would like to ask you. I have seen some of the material published about us in America. Why is it that all Americans who write about us seem to think it necessary to paint us either all black or all white?"

In my opinion it is almost as bad to go to one extreme as the other. I do not think it especially helpful to an understanding of us to write only the good. Whatever you see of our bad side, write about that too. The main thing is to write the truth. . . .”

CHAPTER IV

TRIP TO GORKY

While I was en route to Moscow from Leningrad, my husband, John Abt, was on his way there with the C.I.O. delegation. Almost immediately after I arrived, his voice came over the telephone. They were at the National Hotel, the welcoming banquet was about to begin.

As John's wife, I rated the privilege of participating in the crowded program of events arranged for the delegation's visit, which were described in the report* issued on their return.

John stayed on after the C.I.O. delegation departed, and we planned to make good use of the few weeks at his disposal. Ernie Thornton, head of the Australian Steel Workers' Union, had just arrived in Moscow, so we decided to join forces with him, and made arrangements to visit Gorky, as a typical industrial center.

I had visited this city in 1924, when it was still Nizhni-Novgorod. I remembered its ancient Kremlin, the sleepy, down-at-the-heels appearance of the town. Nizhni-Novgorod, once Moscow's eastern outpost against the Tatars, had been known before the Revolution chiefly for its annual fair to which merchants from all over Russia and from other lands—especially the Orient—came to display their wares. The fair had been revived with the New Economic Policy and that summer it was the city's main attraction, although only a shadowy memory of its former opulence. The impression I had carried away of this town on the Volga was more like a faded print of old Russia than a living part of the new.

We entrained for Gorky the evening of October 31, and next morning we were met by Alexander Shulpin, chairman of the

* Report of the CIO Delegation to the Soviet Union, Congress of Industrial Organizations, Washington, D. C.

Gorky Soviet, tall, heavy set, with broad Slavic features; and young Alexander Ponomarenko, handsome, rosy-cheeked and blonde, head of cultural work in the Soviet, and, as we later learned, the city's foremost orator, a good dancer, a musician, a courteous genial host. With them was the national head of the Auto Workers' Union, who had come from Moscow to initiate the election campaign at the Molotov auto plant, and to check up on winter housing conditions of the workers; and Shakel and Makel, respectively the chairman of the factory committee of the Molotov auto plant and the director of its cultural activities.

As we drove over the fine new bridge across the Oka River, I was startled to see a thriving city, with streets jammed with traffic and hurrying crowds. The old Nizhni-Novgorod I remembered was no more.

At the hotel we were given comfortable, spacious suites, complete with bedroom, sitting room, and bath—and radios going full blast. The little Russian chambermaid welcomed us like a gracious hostess, took our clothes to be pressed, and had hot baths ready. We were led into a dining room set aside for our use, where our hosts awaited us at a table spread with fruits, salads, caviar, cheese, wine, etc., which proved to be only the appetizers to a hearty and delicious meal of which the main course was fish fresh from the Volga.

The people of Gorky love their river! In the fall the sailors, when they disembark after the last voyage of the season, kiss the water, and in the spring the town turns out en masse to see the ice go down. We were told, whatever else we might do, we must sail on the Volga before leaving Gorky.

We learned that with over 750,000 people, the town had doubled in population, and had doubled its industry as well since the Revolution. Half the town's buildings are new. Gorky, after whom the city is named, had to go from his birthplace to Kazan to seek his education. Now there are 30,000 students in the city's institutes and colleges and 80,000 in secondary schools. The latter include the institutes of pedagogy, agriculture, engineering, aviation, river transport, industry, foreign languages, and Marxism-Leninism. Gorky University alone has a thousand students. A big medical school is in construction.

The Mayor himself took charge of a preliminary expedition to show us the town. He pointed out the dramatic and operatic

theaters, the concert hall, the movie houses, the apartment houses for actors, government workers, medical workers, scientific workers, and so on. We strolled in the pleasant workers' park, a wooded stretch along the high bank of the river. The Dynamo sport stadium seating some six thousand people looked spacious, but across the river was the big Torpedo stadium seating 25,000.

Standing high above the shore, commanding a view of the confluence of the Oka and the Volga, we saw the beautiful memorial to Chkalov, one of the town's best beloved sons. "Stalin's Eagle" was the inscription on the massive heroic figure, and on the pedestal below, a map showing his route across the North Pole to America in 1937.

With pride Mayor Shulpin said: "Chkalov was ours, you know, and Molotov, Kalinin, Kuibyshev, Ordzhonikidze, and the Kaganovich brothers—all three of them—have worked here."

Gorky's fine arts museum included a Repin, a Breughel, and some good examples of the moderns. We visited the little house (now a museum) where Gorky lived as a boy with his miserly uncle. The old director and founder of the museum affected a walrus mustache like Gorky's own. He was the last survivor of a local writers' club organized by Gorky. He showed us the bench on which young Gorky was taken over his uncle's knees for a spanking, the table at which he ate, the lamp that had lit his youthful efforts, the small dyeing plant outside, the old grandmother's ikons and clothes and cluttered bureau.

Disappointed at our leaving without setting down our impressions in his guest book, the director came around to the hotel the next morning to get our inscriptions. Seeing a plate of apples on our table, he remarked how as boys he and Gorky together had climbed trees "for those objects."

In the evening we saw a fine performance of Alexey Tolstoy's *Ivan Grozny* (Ivan the Terrible), the first of a trilogy. Nikolay Pokrovsky, an Honored Artist of the Republic, gave what seemed to me an extraordinarily sensitive interpretation of the main role, revealing the psychological complexities of the Tsar's character. But Ponamarenko, Shakel, Makel, and the others felt that he did better in Shakespearean roles and had failed to realize Ivan's stature. The supporting cast was good and the acting, it seemed to me, on a par with what I had seen in Moscow.

During intermission we visited the office of the director.

Courteous, cultured, slightly built, with delicate features, he spoke with deep pride of the work of his theater, which had continued to perform all through the war. The theater has visited Moscow several times, where it has been well received. It put on several new productions every year. "Twelfth Night" and "The Taming of the Shrew" are in their repertoire and they were preparing "Cymbeline."

The following evening we attended a performance of *Car-men* at the local opera. It suffered somewhat by comparison with the magnificent new production I had seen at the Bolshoy in Moscow. The opera company, which was ten years old, had put on several new productions during the war. Eight brigades had given performances at the front. The previous summer they had given ten or twelve performances at workers' theaters around Gorky. They also help the workers' amateur circles put on performances. Erefeyev, the conductor, had produced "Eugene Onyegin" at the Sormovo shipbuilding works. A foreman with a powerful baritone sang Onyegin, a fitter with a beautiful tenor voice was Lensky.

We learned that Gorky has four music schools, a musical technicum, a preparatory ballet school. They were soon to reoccupy their conservatory, used as a hospital during the war.

THE MOLOTOV AUTO PLANT

Our first visit was to the huge Molotov Auto Plant, built in 1931 after the pattern of Ford's River Rouge, with the assistance of American engineers and architects.

The factory had been decorated with three Orders during the war for its mass production of tanks and self-propelled guns.

The plant director, Major General Ivan Loskutov, was broad-faced, stocky, trim, a former peasant boy risen to big-time industrial executive. He gave an impression of super-efficiency as he answered our questions, occasionally turning for a brief conversation over the interplant communications system, which kept him in touch with every department.

Before the war they had produced mainly one and a half ton trucks and medium light cars. During the war all their production had been for the front. With fewer workers than in peacetime, labor productivity had increased by about 61 per cent.

The plant had already reconverted. They were still producing a small quota of tanks, but were manufacturing mainly former car and truck models and retooling for new types, including mass production in 1946 of a new light four-cylinder car, their "Victory" model. The post-war five-year plan of the plant had already been under way for a year. By 1950 a thousand cars a day would be turned out by a force of 90,000 workers. They now had around 50,000, forty per cent women.

The new light cars will be sold at 5,000 rubles, on the installment plan. The workers who made them would have the first chance to buy. They were looking forward to the time when people all over the country could own cars—"as so many Americans do."

"During the war much overtime work was necessary," said Loskutov. "But as soon as the war was over we went back to an eight-hour day. Now if we want overtime we have to negotiate with the trade union. We cannot get it without the union's agreement except in emergencies, and in any case at premium rates."

One of the auto plant's trade union officials sitting beside Loskutov added: "Only 120 hours overtime—ten hours a month—is permitted in a year. That's the law."

By improved methods of work the plant had kept take-home pay up to wartime levels. The workers were now making as much in eight hours as previously in ten and eleven. Stakhanovite workers' wages ranged from 2,000 to 2,500 rubles a month, some even higher. Average skilled workers earned from 800 to 2,500 rubles; unskilled workers, 400 to 600 rubles. But with all the facilities for training and promotion, few remained long at the lowest level.

In addition to cars, the factory was manufacturing consumers' goods—children's bicycles, baby carriages, kitchen utensils, spoons, galoshes, etc.

The celebrated forgerman, Alex Busygin, whose name had become almost as fabulous as that of Stakhanov, went around with us. A big, shy fellow, now a department head and a deputy to the Supreme Soviet, he looked a little wistful when we watched the forging of crankshafts which had been his specialty. We saw automobiles and trucks rolling off the assembly lines, and Soviet jeeps which were broader and heavier than ours.

In a dining room adjoining General Loskutov's office, the inevitable banquet awaited us. We had wanted to talk with

some of the "Profgrouporg" (group organizers), the elected heads of the basic trade union units of twenty workers each, which carry on the day-to-day trade union activity in every Soviet enterprise. Six of them stopped in, on the way home from their shift, while the banquet was still in full force.

Their special responsibilities, they told us, included checking on social insurance arrangements and taking up workers' grievances. At least once in three months they visited every worker at his home to see that his material and family needs were taken care of. If a worker back from sick-leave is given too heavy work by the foreman, it was the group organizer's function to have lighter work assigned. Where a worker, through no fault of his own, fell below the required norm, the organizer arranged that he be paid his basic rate anyway. On his return from a hospital, the welder, Cardin, who had earned 1,200 rubles a month, was transferred to a lighter job which paid only 600 rubles a month. The group organizer saw to it that he received his former pay.

The group organizers constantly check up on living conditions. The young worker Phillipova, for example, was left with a sick stepmother and two young brothers to look after when her father died. Through the trade union she was provided with food and clothing and her home conditions arranged so that she could continue at her job. Karvik, a chauffeur, was taken sick and had no one at home to look after him. The group organizer saw to it that he was supplied with cooked food until he got well, gave him 800 rubles for special needs, in addition to his regular social insurance payments. An invalided worker, Balanova, did not recover rapidly because of difficult home conditions; she was sent to a sanitarium.

The group organizers initiate socialist competition. At the regular meeting the foreman sets each worker's quota for the month, and each worker makes an individual pledge of what he thinks he can produce. The group organizers check on fulfillment. There is both intergroup competition and competition between members of each group, between departments, factories, districts, etc. At the end of the month the group meets, picks its winner, and awards him a banner, which is hung over his machine until it is won from him. Each department also has its "score board" where every worker's production record is chalked up daily. They are followed with the interest Americans follow baseball scores.

The group organizers also look after the interests of the young workers, and help arrange their cultural activities. The Molotov plant took first prize in the Gorky dramatic competition. The group organizers purchase theater, opera, cinema tickets, and distribute them to the workers. In summer they organize excursions into the country, boat trips, picnics.

AIRPLANES INTO WARDROBES

At the Ordzhonikidze Aviation Plant we found the director away on his first vacation since the war, and Colonel Boris Kuprianov, chief engineer, did the honors. Trimly uniformed, he was very young looking with his curly blond hair and rosy cheeks. His light, airy office was paneled in birchwood, giving the impression of a plane interior.

The enterprise was a product of the first Five-Year Plan, which set out to build an aviation industry, formerly lacking in Russia. Colonel Kuprianov had been with the plant since its inception.

"Now," the Colonel told us, "the tension of the war years has eased. Many war emergency workers have returned to their collective farms; some of our women workers have gone back home to take care of their children; but about a third of our workers are still women. We have stopped making fighter planes, and are producing plywood planes, for training purposes."

He opened a thick album containing photographs and models of flour mill machinery, cream separators, agricultural machinery, furniture, cooking utensils, skis, sleds, about a hundred items in all. All this, he explained, was a temporary measure to help overcome the consumers' goods shortage. Their future product would be bus bodies, the training planes, which later will be all-metal, and furniture.

Their reconversion had been accomplished without stoppage in any department. In the transition period workers had taken their voluntarily postponed vacations. The return to an eight-hour day had been largely compensated, as far as take-home pay was concerned, by a special bonus system—a 25 per cent addition for high quality work, and 25 per cent extra for quick mastery of a new type of production. This had also helped to overcome the craft pride of the workers who at first complained:

"We are highly skilled craftsmen, we produce planes—and you ask us to make chairs and wardrobes!" The bonus system, along with agitational work to make them understand that making furniture is just as patriotic as making airplanes, had done the trick.

For its war work, the plant had received two Orders of Lenin and the Order of the Red Banner. A thousand workers had been decorated individually. Kuprianov leafed through an album honoring them. Konotan, a forgerman, had overfulfilled his quota for spades and picks for the trenches and anti-tank defenses that had helped to save Moscow; Anna Sergeyeva of the woodworking department—"No man can produce as much"; Rima Trifonova, a woman who had served as a foreman all through the war; Evdokia Ilbina, "best fitter in the plant;" Piotr Demidov, cook, for preparing good food out of slim rations; Elizabeth Shurkina, supply shop director, who eked out the food supply secured from state stores with food bought in the countryside.

We found the plant modern, efficient, and spotlessly clean. Down one side of the big assembly department planes were being assembled, down another came a stream of wardrobes.

Out at the plant's airfield from which thousands of planes had been flown right into battle, fighter planes were being converted into training planes by the simple process of stripping off the guns and war equipment and putting in an extra seat. A former pilot who had taught Chkalov to fly was in charge. Two test pilots took up a couple of planes for our benefit. They whirled up suddenly from the field in a swift antenna-like formation, describing wide parallel circles. They stunted exuberantly, swooping down and almost blowing our hats off. Colonel Kuprianov looked on indulgently—"Zamechatelnie parni — luche nyet!" ("Wonderful boys—none better!")

We had already overstayed our schedule, but Colonel Kuprianov said we hadn't begun to see his plant—there was the club, the school, the hospital, the creches and kindergartens. We compromised on a creche and kindergarten in a nearby building.

The plant offered kindergarten and creche facilities for all the women workers who wanted them—and most of them did. Of the 1,300 children cared for, 1,000 were in the kindergarten, 300 in the creche, reflecting how few babies were born during the war. "We're making up for it, now!" Kuprianov said. In most

cases the mother brought the child on her way to work, and called for him at 4:30. One of the nine kindergartens kept the children of women who worked night shifts during the week, the mothers taking them home week-ends. All had special facilities for keeping children at night in case the mother was out late.

The creche had flowers everywhere, and even better equipment than I had seen in many Moscow nurseries. Nursing mothers receive a supplementary food ration at the creche twice a day. It was rest hour for the hundred and twenty children. Colonel Kuprianov, looking at the sleeping tots lovingly, said "These are our wealth."

GUNS INTO GARDEN TOOLS

At the Stalin Ordnance Plant, due to the absence of its director, we were taken care of by Chief Engineer Mark Olevsky. Like Kuprianov, he gave an impression of ability and efficiency, but his personality was even warmer and more outgoing. He was the most informal of anyone we talked to, ready to tell us anything, ready to discuss anything under the sun. He moved and talked with such ardor that his black hair became rumpled, his uniform slightly disheveled.

The enterprise had celebrated its tenth anniversary last year. Its wartime record of 100,000 guns had been a twenty-fold increase over pre-war productivity, with only fifty per cent additional workers. This, said Olevsky, was due to the wonderful spirit and the inventiveness of the workers and technical staff. At a production conference held in 1943, 7,000 proposals were made by the workers and technical staff. This plant had also received the Order of Lenin, the Order of the Red Banner and the Order of the Patriotic War, and hundreds of its individual workers had been decorated.

Unlike the other factories we had visited, the question here was not one of reconversion, but of conversion to peacetime production, since it had always been an ordnance plant.

"By the end of 1944," Olevsky told us, "when we felt that the end of the war was not far off, we began to prepare for peacetime production. We were to make machinery for oil industry since our heavy stamping machines and forges could be used for that. We wanted to get oil equipment from America—but

could not get as much as we wanted," he smiled somewhat ruefully, "so we decided we'd better rely on ourselves. In March 1945, we built an entirely new department for drills and pumps and other oil industry equipment. Now about 90 per cent of our output is peacetime goods. A new assistant director from an oil machinery plant arrived and we artillery people are being pushed into the background—the place is crawling with oil machinery specialists!"

As I struck a match to light a cigarette, Olevsky said:

"How come an American has to use a primitive match instead of a lighter? We make very fine lighters in this factory, I'll get you some." The lighters arrived later, each engraved with our names.

When we asked the usual question as to whether there had been any lay-offs during the conversion period, Olevsky laughed uproariously.

"Lay-offs! If I had 10,000 skilled workers from America I could put them right to work. We have to spend about half our time wrestling with the labor shortage. We have so many orders we need three eight-hour shifts, but we have only enough workers to man two shifts."

From Olevsky we learned another part of the answer as to how Soviet wages had been retained at their wartime level. The changeover from an eleven-hour to an eight-hour day, by itself, would have considerably decreased take-home pay. Improved production methods kept the decrease down to 6 per cent; but the war tax, which had amounted to 15-17 per cent of wages, had been removed in August, so actually take-home pay had increased by 9 to 11 per cent. Besides, a special decree covering all industry guaranteed the continuance of wartime weekly wages for a three-month period after the eight-hour day was restored.

Making our tour of the factory we saw how, indeed, oil and other machinery were literally pushing guns to the wall. The factory was producing crankshafts for Diesel motors, axes, equipment for lumbering and for railroads, parts of ships, and about seventy types of consumers' goods—checker sets, toys, electric lamps, meat grinders, washboards, brushes, can openers, garden tools, etc. Some of this production had been started during the war for the needs of their own workers. Every worker in the factory had his own spade, hoe, rake, and pitchfork. Their victory

gardens had helped solve the wartime food problem. Now their consumers' goods were for the general public as well.

Before the war about a fifth of the plant's workers had been women and the proportion had doubled during the war. Now there was a tendency for women to leave, as was their right now that wartime labor mobilization was over.

Ernie was impressed by the high degree of mechanization of the plant, and was amazed by some of the jobs women were handling. In the forge department traveling cranes were operated by women. Women were operating the gear for handling and turning the blooms, a job Ernie was sure had never before been done by any women anywhere.

Like Kuprianov, Olevsky was not satisfied to have us see only the production end of his work. Since this was our last visit of the day, we let him have his way. Each department had its own factory kitchen and dining room where the workers got their main meals. There was also a special dining room for the school children, a gay place, decorated with colorful fairy tale murals. On a "socialist competition pledge" hanging on the wall of one of the restaurants, the staff had pledged cleanliness, quick service, courteous manners, "no slamming down of plates." For unmarried workers there were special dining rooms where they could get meals outside of factory hours on their ration cards. The factory ran three big auxiliary farms, from which they had supplied their workers with food over and above their rations, and special diets for invalids, children, and pregnant women.

We visited the apartments of several workers. This was one of the things we felt we ought to do, because in America there seems to be an impression that visitors are not permitted to walk in on ordinary Soviet citizens. There was never any question about our doing it if we wished, but I myself was always a little embarrassed, although we were never met with anything but cordiality. To bring back the kind of information people ask for in America requires asking people, "What wages do you get?"; "What rent do you pay?"; "What do you have to eat?"; etc., etc. There was no hesitancy about answering such questions but I never got over the feeling that it was rather a rude thing to do, especially in view of the personal sacrifice and suffering undergone by these people.

The apartments we dropped in on were the homes of average workers. They had two or three rooms, kitchen and bath. One of

them was bright and gay and neat, with snowy curtains at the window; another was rather dingy. We gathered that differences were not so much due to wages as to the kind of housekeeper the woman of the family was. We also looked in on a number of newly built eight-family apartment houses being prepared for occupancy, more modern than the older apartments, though not up to American standards. Many individual homes were going up.

In one section we came upon rows of wooden barracks. "These," Olevsky told us, "are for our temporary workers. During the war we had to house a lot of our workers this way. We hope to get rid of all barracks within a year and move all our workers into better quarters."

In the women's barracks we found six girls in one large room. They had made the place gay with embroideries and plants. The men's dormitories looked a little grimmer, although even here those who had made an effort to fix things up had achieved attractive results. The women's barracks had a laundry where they could do their own clothes if they wished, but the factory runs a mechanized laundry, which collects and delivers at a nominal fee.

Since we had visited the children's institutions at the aviation factory, we had hoped to pass them up here. However much one may love children, the visits to kindergartens and creches were beginning to be trying. But Olevsky adored his children, knew most of them by name, so we had to go the rounds again with a retinue of older kids intensely curious about the American "auntie" and all the "uncles."

We called on an old worker, Ivan Fedoseyev, who had worked for fifty years as a milling machine operator. Retired, he had come back to work during the war.

He lived in an attractive wooden house built eleven years before out of his savings. It had cost him 12,000 rubles. He apologized for not being able to offer us proper hospitality. His wife, a member of the district Soviet, was out on official duties. The house was bright with plants, paintings, embroidered towels and rugs.

"Why did you decide to build a house of your own? Was it hard to find an apartment?" Ernie asked Fedoseyev.

"No," Fedoseyev answered, "I am the kind of person who isn't happy unless I'm digging around in the earth—I love

flowers. Of course, during the war I grew vegetables instead. Next year I'll have my flowers again."

We also looked in on the Demobilization Center that served this district and found the system the same as in the Moscow Demobilization Center. At least fifty per cent of the returning army men were receiving more highly paid jobs than before the war. The different Gorky factories were competing for their services. Some had representatives right at the center to talk up the advantages of their particular plant. Banquets were given to returning men at some of the plants to try to persuade them to come there. Meetings were organized, at which representatives from different plants told about the jobs available. The men listened, investigated, took their pick. The atmosphere was something like fraternity rushing season in an American college. Olevsky explained: "If I tell them I have a golden mountain at my plant, for example—the others say they have a platinum mountain!"

Then dinner was served in a room adjoining Olevsky's office—one of the merriest, warmest, most informal affairs of our whole visit. The fair-haired waitress, Tamara, a Stalingrad veteran, at once became a member of the group, and as the men kidded her in a friendly way a bright flush suffused her soft skin. She had a sweet way of biting her lower lip in confusion yet was very much mistress of herself. She had gone to Stalingrad with a tank repair unit. Her general had learned that she was a skilled draughtsman, so he sent for her, and set her to drawing the maps for Stalingrad's final battles. She had stayed on to help in the rebuilding of Stalingrad, and had only returned to her home in Gorky a few months before. Now this girl who had helped turn the tide of the war at Stalingrad was telling us what a privilege it was to be serving guests from America. She was planning to go on to the Moscow Architectural Institute. She would be accepted without exams because of her excellent record at the technicum. She had hoped to go this year. But when she got home, she found that all her clothes had been worn out by her younger sister. She didn't blame her sister—she had been working too for the front, and had needed the clothes. But Tamara wanted nice clothes for Moscow and besides her mother needed her help at home for a while, her father having been killed. So she had temporarily postponed her education, and had just taken this waitress job.

Olevsky was a wonderful host, plying us with food and drinks, and questions about America.

"I have always longed to visit your country," he confided, "what Soviet engineer does not? We know about your great technical achievements from the equipment you sent us during the war, and from magazines. All your equipment was excellent—except the tanks. Our own, and the German tanks we captured, stood up better in battle, excuse me for saying so. There is only one thing that troubles me about coming to America. Do you mind my telling you what it is?"

We said of course not.

"I am a Jew. In my own country that makes no difference. But I hear there's a bad attitude in your country toward the Jewish people. That's something I don't think I could stand. Please tell me, would I notice this if I came?"

We told him that although, we were ashamed to say, there was anti-Semitism in America we thought that he, as a visitor, would not personally suffer from it.

"Just the same," he went on, "the fact that there is such a feeling toward my people would hurt me. There is so much that is fine and democratic about your country, so much that we admire. And the Americans I have met do not seem to have any racial prejudice. You know, it even seems a little odd to me that I should be bringing this question up. I am a Jew, Emelian, the director of our factory is Armenian—everyone loves him. We have worked here together for years. People respect us for our work, no one ever thinks of our nationality. Before the war, I never even stopped to think what nationality meant—we always took the equality of all nationalities so completely for granted. The war brought the subject into our consciousness. Because Hitler's propaganda was directed not only against Jews, but against Slavs, and particularly Russians, it was necessary to counterpose this with an emphasis on the Russians as a great people, who actually were bearing the greatest burden of the war. Not that this meant belittling the contribution of other peoples. But for the first time we began to think about Russians as Russians, Jews as Jews, Armenians as Armenians. There is a touch of national consciousness that did not exist before. But this will not last."

THE PLANT THAT LAUNCHED A THOUSAND SHIPS

At the Krasnoye Sormovo Plant, immortalized in Maxim Gorky's *Mother*, we attended a celebration at which the plant and the workers received their final wartime decorations.

Krasnoye Sormovo was now 96 years old. "All the ships that sail the Volga were made here," they told us. Many skilled workers in Gorky's other industries received their training in Krasnoye Sormovo. During the war it built a thousand ships, 100,000 railroad cars, and tanks and other military equipment. Now it was reconverting, and would build ships and wagons and street cars.

The celebration took place in the big packed auditorium of its Workers' Club. We were seated on the platform, gay with banners, among city and factory and trade union and party officials. Wild applause greeted the announcement that trade union delegates from America and Australia were present. John and Ernie had to make speeches.

On a red-draped table were piled hundreds of little boxes containing the medals which Pedyev, from the Regional Soviet, handed out. First, came the "Order of the Patriotic War," given to the factory and its "whole collective" for their wartime production. Bestowing it on the director, Pedyev said:

"All the workers of your glorious factory held high your banner of honor in the years of the war. Our Red Army and our government have the greatest gratitude for the production you gave the front. Through the greatest hardships you kept producing. You passed the test, keeping up the high traditions of solid, durable production of old Sormovo—always among the first in our land. Our path ahead leads toward the further strengthening of the economy and might of our country, the full flowering of our socialist system, the raising of the living conditions of all our workers and the greater prosperity of all our people. The presence of our dear guests from America and Australia here with us tonight is a guarantee of the peaceful road ahead—of the continued friendship of the great Allies forged in the war."

As Sormovo's heroes of labor filed past us on the platform, the name and wartime record of each was read off. Among them were the chief engineer, the head doctor, the chief dispatcher, the kindergarten director, a lathe operator, a welder, the gray-haired woman secretary to the plant director, the chairman of

the trade union wage committee, the director of the plant inventions' committee, and hundreds of others—women in kerchiefs, young fellows with their hair in their eyes, shy girls, bearded patriarchs of labor.

The ceremony over, we went to a banquet. The director, General Efim Rubinshik, was gray haired, but young and lively, with snapping blue eyes, and a contagious exuberance. His uniform gleamed with Orders. The honored guests at the table were a group of old-timers who had come back from retirement during the war. The two oldest were Vassily Tokarov, who had worked at Krasnoye Sormovo 57 years, and Mikhail Bialov, who had worked there 53 years. (Bialov's wife was a Mother Heroine, having raised eleven children.) A third veteran Bokov, the youngest, had worked in this factory 61 years. There were no steamships on the Volga when he was a boy—his father was a Volga boatman. He had made a pledge to work in the plant until he was a hundred years old.

"All through the war," Tokarov told us, "I worked here to help defeat the enemy. Now I live in the plant as in my own home. I shall work here until the end of my days—until I die they shall never get me away from here. A curse on Hitler who wanted to destroy our land and our happy life. Our Soviet government gave everything to us, the lowliest, who had nothing before. Now everything I have belongs to my country."

As we were taking leave, Tokarov caught hold of me, in his intensity thrusting his face so close to mine that his long gray beard tickled my nose.

"I want you to tell the people of America something for me. We must keep on working together—that's the main thing." He wagged a long bony finger in my face. "This finger has no strength alone"—he held up a second finger—"two are better than one, but still not enough—but when I close my hand into a fist, like this, see what strength there is in it. And with two hands, it's better still. That's the way we work, that's the way all countries should work together—in peace as well as in war."

THE ISKRA COLLECTIVE FARM

The following morning we drove westward to the Iskra kolkhoz (collective farm) over a road deeply rutted by the heavy tanks that had rolled steadily toward the front from Gorky.

The kolkhoz, about forty miles outside of the city, lay along a branch of the Oka River. We passed well-built cattle barns and drew up before a little log building that served as the administration center. A group of collective farmers came out to meet us. At their head was the farm chairman, Pavel Mikhailovich Fomin, a small well-knit figure dressed in a blue suit of military cut, a big fur hat, trim felt and leather boots. Bushy brown hair and gray streaked whiskers framed his gentle, weather-beaten face, with its deep-set bright eyes of that space-blue shade belonging to sea captains or people who live on prairies or steppes.

He invited us into his tiny office and stopped before a blueprint, hanging on the wall, of the new club house whose construction the war had interrupted.

The club floor plan included a big auditorium with a stage and dressing rooms, library, laboratory, lecture rooms, a restaurant, and a billiard room. A wing would be the rest home, where run-down farmers could either take a complete rest or continue work free from responsibilities, with good food and any special treatment they might need.

The kolkhoz, we learned, was run by an elected board of seven members whose activities are discussed and passed on at regular general collective farm membership meetings. The kolkhoz was organized in 1932 and eighty-five per cent of the villagers joined at once. Within a year, when they saw how well collective farm members were doing, the remainder came in. Their main crops were wheat and rye which covered 725 hectares (a hectare is 2.47 acres). The machine and tractor station handled most of their plowing and threshing. With their own machinery they did all their sowing and seventy-five per cent of the harvesting. The collective had a big dairy farm and sheep, pigs, and poultry. They specialized in raising meat cattle during the war.

Before the war they had delivered to the government twenty-seven centners of meat per year (a centner is a little more than 220 pounds) but by 1944 they were delivering twice as much and this year they had already fulfilled the government program of forty-eight centners with two months to go. Their milk production had increased from 23,000 liters annually before the war, to 51,000 in 1944. During the war the Iskra Collective Farm gave the army forty-two horses. Now they had seventy horses and were planning to establish a stud farm.

The farm's income in 1940 had been about 340,000 rubles. It had reached 1,340,000 in the first ten months of 1945.

Before the war the kolkhoz members had been receiving 1.7 kilograms of wheat and rye per work-day unit after having made deliveries to the government of around 1,500 centners. But the country needed more grain during the war. In 1943, the collective farm supplied 3,300 centners of grain while maintaining the prewar work-day quota for the workers. In 1944 the government asked for only 2,200 centners, which left 2.1 kilograms per work-day unit. This year the government quota was 1,900 centners, already delivered, and work-day unit pay would again exceed two kilograms. Pay for a work-day unit also included three kilograms of potatoes, one kilogram of vegetables, besides money payments from the sale of collective farm produce. Before the war the money payment had been around two rubles per work-day unit. During the war it increased to eight rubles and this year would probably reach nine rubles.

The collective now numbers ninety-seven families, and has a total population of about 400, of whom 175 are working members. Eighty-seven men went away to war leaving behind only six old men, three of whom had since died, and women, adolescents, and children. Six demobilized Red Army men had returned. Two war invalids were doing light jobs. In addition to the government pensions the collective farm gives them a free supply of flour and other food. For one of them the kolkhoz is building a new house, for the other a cow has been provided. Clothing has been given to their children.

By this time other kolkhoz members peering through the doorway had joined the conversation and gave us examples of how different families were fixed. There was Zoya Berezina, for instance, whose husband was killed, leaving her with two small children. This year she had already earned 980 work-day units for which she had received two tons of grain as well as 9,000 rubles and large quantities of potatoes and vegetables in addition to what she had gathered from her own garden plot. She owned a cow, a calf, two goats, two sheep, three lambs, two pigs, and fifteen chickens; such earnings and possessions seemed to be typical.

One member of our party was puzzled as to why Berezina received pay for 980 work-days when there are only 365 days in the year. Fomin explained:

"Work-days are sometimes counted for a household rather than for the individual, and Berezina's sons, though young, had a certain number of work-days to their credit. Then you must understand that the term work-day means simply a certain norm of work. These norms are carefully worked out by department heads and presented for discussion and final approval at a general collective farm meeting.

"One farmer often earns three or four work-days in a single day. For example, the transport of twenty-five cartloads of manure 250 meters bring 1.25 work-days; the sorting of 50 centners of grain, three work-days; the vernalization of thirty centners of grain, two work-days, and so on."

The collective farm members were divided up into brigades with leaders who kept the daily records of each member. The brigade leader distributed the tasks each morning.

Ernie Thornton, a farm boy himself, asked whether they took turns milking, since he remembered this as a task most Australian farm workers shun. Apparently this was no problem on the Iskra kolkhoz. Women in charge of the cows chose the job voluntarily and considered it nice, clean, interesting work. Besides, it brought more pay than many other types of farm work, and the milkmaids received a bonus for good results. During the first half of the year the milkmaids had received from 600 to 900 liters of milk for their own use as reward for overfulfillment of the plan.

The cash income that was divided among the collective farm members came both from deliveries to the state and from the sale of kolkhoz products on the open market.

"As our bookkeeper here can tell you, we have two current accounts, one for capital investments and one for turnover. When the time comes that we can make a pretty close estimate of the year's income we call a general meeting to decide how much of the total receipts will go into capital investment. The usual amount is fifteen to twenty per cent of the total profit. The remainder is divided among the members as work-day unit pay. It's up to individual members, whether they keep for their own use or sell the products they receive for their labor as well as what they raise in their own private plots. Collective farm transport is available for them to get their produce to the market."

The Iskra kolkhoz had its own school for the four primary classes. After that they attended one of two village schools, respec-

tively two and four miles away. In the nearby village of Terayeva was an evening school for young people whose education the war had interrupted. During the winter, agricultural courses for adults were held on the collective farm. A summer nursery and kindergarten will soon operate in winter, too. Mothers have a month's vacation before and after giving birth, and all go to a nearby district maternity hospital. The farm had its own first aid station with a *feldsher* (physician's assistant) and a nurse in charge; more serious cases were sent to the district polyclinic or hospital. Before the war every kolkhoz member had a regular vacation of one or two weeks, many going away to resorts. During the war only the sick could have vacations, but now they were resumed for all.

The farm cultural organizer got out a weekly wall newspaper on collective farm activities. During the harvest and other busy seasons the trade union committee of the Molotov Automobile Plant, which had patronage over this kolkhoz, sent out cultural brigades who provided entertainment and educational work for the farmers in the fields. Films were shown several times a week. Before the war every collective farm member subscribed to both local and national papers. Subscriptions were cut down because of the paper shortage during the war so papers were posted in prominent places. The farm also had amateur art, dramatic, singing, and dancing circles, and regular lectures.

"Tea" was waiting for us in the little log hut of the veterinary next door. His wife, with the help of several collective farm women, had spread out a sumptuous meal in the modest room—bread, biscuits, and pirozhki, creamy farm butter, huge bowls of honey, plates with sour pickles, sausage, and cheese, steaming platters of fish. The drinks were vodka and champagne—the chairman's New Year supply, it turned out. When we protested he said: "Such dear, dear guests—all the way from America and Australia. I never thought I would see such people at my farm—nothing is too good for them."

The fish was followed by a platter heaped high with meat, then cakes, fruit and tea. At last we staggered to our feet and tramped out to the main street. How familiar the long street with the little log houses along both sides, the wattled courtyard fences, the trees in the background with great crows' nests in their upper branches, black blotches against the sky. The meadows all around were already white with snow, but the streets had thawed and we

floundered in the deep and sticky Russian mud. (Come back in two years, they said, and we'll have paved streets for you.)

Our hosts took us to inspect the livestock in their warm, clean, well-kept sheds. A snowy flock of leghorns, sturdy pigs in beautifully clean surroundings, and fine looking cattle. They insisted we climb the scaffolding of the club building and walk all around it on the high shaky boards—quite a feat after that enormous “tea.” The collective farm children followed us as we poked our noses in the sheds where grain and potatoes were stored.

A rosy sunset glowed and faded, the frosty night came on, stars filled the sky. All the collective farm windows shone brightly—for every cottage had electricity.

In a little room behind the cow barn ruddy-cheeked milkmaids and other farm workers gathered to meet the foreign guests. They giggled and squirmed shyly at our questions. One of them finally said: “Here, for the first time in our lives, we meet friends from America and Australia, and we swallow our tongues!”

“How did you manage to do everything with your men all away?” I asked, and one of them spoke up. “We worked every day not even taking rest days. We worked until twelve at night and got up again at four in the morning, that’s how we did it.”

“But how could you find the strength?”

“Where did our Red Army men find the strength? We had to feed them so they would have the strength they needed. The Red Army men were our husbands, sons, and brothers.”

“And when they come back again will you keep on doing all you are doing now?”

“Many will not be coming back. Most of our husbands were killed at the front. We will be happy if some of our sons come back. We are used to working and most of us will keep right on. There is plenty for all to do to build a better life. Already things are easier. Well—there may be some who will stop for a while and have babies. Marina over there is only waiting for her husband to come back and start a family.”

Marina giggled, blushed, and chewed the end of her kerchief.

One of the visitors asked them whether it was easier living on a collective farm than on an individual farm. The women looked puzzled as though they had almost forgotten what that meant. Then one spoke up.

“Certainly, it’s much easier. Maybe seeing us now, you do not

understand what a good life we had before the war. Why, when we worked just our own farms our cows gave only twelve or fifteen liters of milk a day. Now they give twenty to thirty and sometimes forty. And it's easier to take care of children in the kolkhoz. They go to school together; when we work in the fields they are looked after—and they have a chance to grow up into cultured people and go to college. Some of our young people got to be professors before the war and many of our men were officers in the Red Army."

"And what kind of life do you want now the war is over?"

"Why the same kind of life we had before—only better. And peace, that's the main thing."

"By the way," another volunteered, "two of our farm women were Soviet deputies. Our Galina Maiores is a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, and she has the Order of Lenin. We want to elect her again this year. And our Shubina, who died, was the best milkmaid in the whole country. She was a member of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and used to go to Moscow."

At this point the three women agronomists arrived to fetch us to their seed selection station. They carry on experimental work for the government while helping the kolkhoz. They conduct twelve substations in other collective farms in the region which have experimental plots, and they have produced 160 selected varieties of seed.

We looked in at a saw mill, where two of the war invalids were working. Then to the stables, where one by one favorite horses were led out to be caressed and called by their pet names—especially a little colt they treated like a child.

Now it was time for another meal and in the veterinary's house the table was again heaped high. Our hosts urged that we spend the night on the farm and we gladly accepted.

One after another the collective farm members crowded into the small room. The milkmaids were now in their Sunday best, with bright kerchiefs on their heads. A little vodka drove away their shyness and they sang their heads off, while one of the demobilized Red Army men played an accordion and another sang lustily, with his arm around the waist of the prettiest milkmaid. Among the milkmaids was Shura, a sort of collective farm bard who improvised rhymes.

One of the guests was a demobilized sailor of the Baltic Red

Fleet, a former village lad who had gone to Leningrad University and was now spending his leave on the kolkhoz. He recited Yessenin, asked me questions about American literature and, to help him with his English, requested that I send him a subscription to *Soviet Russia Today*. At one point he leaned over and asked, "And how is the role of General Sherman in the Civil War regarded in America today?"

Out in the kitchen, cooking for us, was Maria Volkova. Learning that she had been elected to the regional Soviet in Gorky in 1939, I asked her about her duties as a deputy. She described her work, which had to do with such problems as organizing better sowing and harvesting campaigns, getting more consumers' goods to the country districts, and other matters vital to the farmers.

But what Maria really wanted to talk about was the cow, Rosa. Maria had been a milkmaid. She had injured her arm and now could only do housework, but she yearned to be back among her cows.

"I had very good cows—I knew the habits of each of them and their characters and they knew I understood them, so they gave me lots of milk. Rosa was the best. I knew the moment I laid eyes on her, even though she was a scrawny thing then, that she would be a prize cow. I fattened her up, petted her, talked to her and that made her happy so she gave more milk. When I started milking her she gave twenty-five liters a day; later she gave forty-one. So she went to Moscow to the Fair—imagine, my Rosa!"

"But she died at the Fair," Maria continued sadly. "I had to come back to the farm and leave her there; I guess she missed me."

She went on talking about the fine herd they now had of Krasny Gorbarka cows. But she was pretty disgusted when she found I could tell her nothing about the American breeds of cows and how much milk each gives.

The evening wore on with singing and gaiety. Makel, the cultural director of the auto plant's trade union committee, who was with us, had a fine baritone voice and he broke into operatic numbers which shook the dishes on the table. The milkmaids joined in, which was more than the foreign guests could do. What a poor showing we made when we were finally compelled to do some singing in response!

There was dancing, somewhat handicapped by lack of space,

while the milkmaids sang an old folk song improvising new couplets about love, kisses, and returning Red Army men. The little room rocked with merriment.

In the wee small hours we were guided through the frosty night to the different houses among which we were distributed. Our hostess, the head agronomist, was apologetic because she did not have modern comforts to give us. On a shelf in her little room was a pile of music—Chopin, Beethoven and Bach. In the cottage where some of the others were put up there was a piano, and singing and dancing continued there most of the night.

At seven o'clock the radio came on, waking us with news and music. Back at the veterinarian's cottage, an immense breakfast awaited us.

ON THE VOLGA

Our last day in Gorky had arrived and everyone was in a dither because there were still so many things to be seen. A very special surprise had been promised for our last day.

All our hosts had come to have breakfast with us at the hotel on this last morning. There were institutes, schools, workers' clubs, all sorts of things to see and people to interview, and an appointment in the Mayor's office in the late afternoon.

Someone suddenly remarked: "But they haven't been on the Volga!" Consternation. How was it possible that the most important item had been overlooked? Impossible that we should spend all this time beside the Volga without a sail on the Volga.

So, although it was the end of the season for navigation on the Volga, which, in a few days, would be solid ice, a boat ride was arranged. It began in a heavy flurry of snow. The old pilot had sailed the Volga for forty-nine years. "Once you start on the river you can never leave it as long as you live," he told us.

Since we really could not see much through the snow storm, I took advantage of the quiet hours on the boat to get Shakel and Makel aside, while the others played chess, to tell me something of the training of workers at Soviet factories. This is the picture I got from them, as it applied particularly to the Molotov Automobile factory.

Before a new worker starts on a job, the master (working foreman) of the brigade to which he is attached, explains the ma-

chine he will operate and how to organize his work to get the best results. If the worker enters as an apprentice, he is attached to a Stakhanovite or highly skilled worker in the department for training. He also attends a so-called "technical minimum circle," where he learns the basic facts about his work. This is done in working hours (reduced in case of apprentice workers under eighteen). The amount of time spent in these circles depends on the complexity of the trade to be learned. The next stage of training, which is not obligatory, but which most workers go through to advance themselves, is the "circle for improving skills." These are held after working hours. Then there is the Stakhanovite school, where the most advanced Stakhanovite workers, with the help of the engineering and technical staff, share their skills and experience with other workers. Groups gather for this instruction either inside the factory or outside, depending on whether direct demonstration on the machine is required.

The courses for increasing the qualifications of brigade leaders range in length from three months to one year. These are not obligatory, but are usually well attended. They have general educational as well as purely technical features. There are similar courses for working foremen. Series of lectures for the engineering and technical staff deal with improved use of machinery, new technical discoveries, economic or political matters connected with their work, or special questions they themselves may request. There is an auto-mechanical technicum connected with the factory for skilled workers who wish to go further. Those attending the technicum are given special hours and conditions of work to facilitate study. From the technicum they often enter the Gorky Industrial Institute to study engineering. Those attending the institute while continuing their work at the factory have special hours and conditions of work. At the F.Z.O. (Evening Schools for Working Youth), young people whose education was interrupted continue their general education through high school. When they have completed this they may, if they wish, go on to college instead of continuing work. Young people attending the F.Z.O. are not permitted any overtime. Classes are staggered so that they study one evening and attend classes the next. At examination time in the spring they are allowed a month free of work to prepare for their exams, while drawing their pay.

In addition to these various educational and training facili-

ties there are numerous classes of all kinds where the workers may receive instruction in any field that interests them. Often after taking these courses the workers find that they wish to take up some other profession and the trade unions help them. One young worker had displayed such talent in an art class that he had been released from work and entered in the Gorky art school. There would be many such cases now that the war was over.

After our chilly ride on the Volga, we were driven to the Mayor's office for our concluding visit. In Mayor Shulpin's office were charts and models of the twenty-five year city development plan which war had interrupted. Speaking of education, Shulpin told us: "We feel that it is a catastrophe if a single child is not in school. At the beginning of the school year we surveyed every district to make sure every child was accommodated. We found nineteen who were not, but now we have 100 per cent attendance."

Presently Mayor Shulpin's table blossomed out with another feast. Farewell speeches expressed gratitude to us for coming—friendship and lasting peace between our countries, as always, the keynote. Gifts were bestowed on us, of the beautiful handpainted wooden ware for which the peasants of the Gorky district are famous. Overdue for our final engagement, we at last made our farewells, rushed back to our hotel to pack our bags to be ready to put on the train that night, and were off to the surprise party. On the way we learned its nature. We were to visit the champagne factory, "Gorky's pride"—which they had saved for last.

It was an impressive little plant. The heads of the various departments had stayed overtime to receive us and were on hand in fresh smocks to show us the works (and give us the works!). We were shown every step of the process of making champagne, heard every technical detail of its production from grape to bottle. Finally the director, Kniazen, led us into another room where a table groaned with food and drink—and we groaned too, just having risen from the Mayor's table! All the department heads were there, the woman head of the trade union committee, and other trade union and party officials, and the director's pretty daughter, in addition to Ponamarenko, Shakel, Makel, and our other friends.

As we ate, we drank our way through a whole series of wonderful wines—from Georgia, Azerbaidzhan, Armenia, the Crimea—wines of all the sixteen Union Republics and all the autonomous

republics and seemingly from all the autonomous regions as well. Happily there were big jugs beside each of us where we were permitted to empty what we could not manage to down with each toast. It had all been planned with the greatest care. The ritual required at least six hours, and we had to squeeze it into about an hour. When I protested that I could not keep on drinking the director told me not to worry. He was an expert, he knew exactly in what order to serve the wines, and how much could be taken to have only pleasant effects.

The introduction to all the wines of all the republics, was only the beginning. Next we were supposed to sample each year's vintage of champagne, and each variety produced each year, from the time of the founding of the factory in 1939, down to the latest, "their own invention," a sparkling red champagne which they loved best of all and which I found more pleasing than ordinary champagne. I managed to get by with a pretended sip of each, tossing the rest into the pitcher. The director was deeply injured that we were unable to do justice to his precious products. He wore a badge of honor on his lapel. He and his staff had as much pride of workmanship in the making of champagne as had gone into the automobiles and planes in the other factories we had visited.

In between drinks we gathered information about the factory. They had kept on increasing production all through the war years—a matter of honor since good champagne was also a contribution to victory. We asked what the five-year plan envisaged for the champagne industry.

"Our five-year plan," said director Kniazen with deep seriousness, "is to bring champagne into the home of every Soviet worker—and to replace the drinking of vodka with more cultured drinking habits, more worthy of the great Soviet people."

CHAPTER V

STALINGRAD

Back in Moscow for the November celebration, the city already looked brighter than when I first arrived. Many buildings wore fresh coats of paint. The Kremlin's ruby stars, surrounded by scaffolding when we left for Gorky, now sparkled free. Everywhere were red banners and festive decoration. People appeared in new clothes, their faces shining with the joy of celebrating their first big postwar holiday.

Our seats for the parade were in the trade union section to the right of the reviewing stand occupied by Soviet leaders and Red Army generals, atop Lenin's Tomb in the Red Square. I was sure it was Stalin's hand I saw in the center of the stand raised in salute, his body obscured by other figures, only to discover later that he had not been there. What a to-do the foreign press made of his absence! He was a very, very sick man; he was undergoing a serious brain operation; he was dead; he had been deposed by his generals who were about to stage a coup d'état; he had been replaced by Molotov. Muscovites missing Stalin, remarked simply:

"Ah, Joseph Vissarionovich is still away on vacation in Sochi. That's good. He should have a long rest before he comes back to work again."

The picked troops of Moscow headed the parade, followed by guards regiments resplendent with medals; horsemen and mechanized troops; the dapper little uniformed figures of lads from the Suvorov military schools, and finally the civilian demonstration, the people pouring into the square in twelve columns, under a sea of waving banners, pictures, and slogans. The élan of victory, relaxation after years of struggle, the promise of long peace were in

the air. More impressive to me than the parade itself was the joy in the streets of Moscow all that day and the next and the next. Bands played in all the squares, dancing went on day and night. Circus performers went through the city on trucks, doing their turns; sport societies put on exhibitions, puppet shows delighted the children. At night the buildings were festooned with lights, fireworks garlanded the skies.

After my husband's departure, Ksana and I arranged to fly to Stalingrad. The casual atmosphere around airports and planes sometimes gives Americans the impression that the Russians are careless about flying. Certainly they have a long way to go before they achieve the stream-lined precision which marks our air travel: the sleek busses, the porter service, the handling of baggage, the weighing in, the swanky waiting rooms, the announcers—"Passengers for flight 8 to Washington go through gate No. 4"—the signal system inside the planes, the attentive stewardesses. Russian air travel is nothing like that. While some of the planes have upholstered passenger seats, you were just as likely to find yourself in a converted bomber with bucket seats. I was struck, however, by the extreme care taken to avoid risks. Planes did not leave the ground except under dependable weather conditions. No passenger planes flew at night; if you did not reach your destination before dark, there was a stopover until the next day. This was partly because the airports, due to war losses, lacked equipment to guide the planes in at night. (In the spring of 1948, night flying was instituted on all the main lines.) Once in a Soviet plane, you knew you were in good hands. Most of the aviators had flown in the war, and their medals bore reassuring testimony to their flying prowess.

We luckily drew a comfortable passenger plane and had a smooth, swift flight over immense, well-tilled fields, the land pock-marked everywhere with shell holes.

Then the vast, awesome ruin of the hero city lay below, and we came down at the airport on the outskirts of the town. Like everything around Stalingrad, it had been a battlefield, and all the original buildings had been destroyed. In a modest little white-washed building, the airport commandant greeted us cordially and led us into rather bare but spotlessly clean rooms where cots were provided for waiting passengers. Presently Feodor Lopatov, deputy mayor, arrived to welcome us and drive us into Stalingrad.

It was already quite dark when we reached the outskirts of

the city—but not too dark to see the utter devastation. Lopatov pointed to the ruins: “That was our pedagogical institute—this our hospital center—this big grain elevator is about the only thing the Germans didn’t destroy.” In the heart of the city the ruin was even more complete. Yet in almost every rubble heap there somewhere gleamed a light, where people had made themselves homes. Lopatov remarked:

“Some of your countrymen have proposed that we leave the ruins of Stalingrad as they are and rebuild the city in a new place. But the people of Stalingrad do not consider that Stalingrad died. We could not offend our beloved city by making a museum of it.”

No, Stalingrad did not die. And there is no need to leave it in ruins to keep forever alive the surpassing heroism of its people and the gift of life and freedom their agony bought for the democratic nations. (As I write this, back in America, an obscene picture comes before my eyes. A cartoon in the *New York Sun* a few nights ago—a hideous caricature of Stalin reaching into a bag marked “Europe,” captioned “Stalingrab.” Not Stalingrad is defiled thereby—but the artist, the paper which published it, and any American who could look at it without shame.)

Our car drew up on a side street before a low building gleaming with fresh white paint in the moonlight. Lopatov apologized. “This was built hastily to serve as a hotel—it is all we have.”

A few rooms on the second floor, the largest reserved for me, housed the hotel guests. My bed was soft, rich rugs were on the floor, fresh curtains at the window. It was warm and cozy, heated by a huge old-fashioned stove built in the wall. The manager came in to make sure I had everything I needed. Outside my window was the ruin of an apartment house through whose gaping windows and crumbling walls the moon shone.

After we had washed up Lopatov came back for dinner with us. They served steak, juicy and tender, because they knew that was what an American would like. When the red Caucasian wine was poured Lopatov offered a toast: “To the memory of President Roosevelt—known and loved by the whole Soviet people as a great and good man who understood our people and understood the meaning of fascism—his death was a loss to all humanity.”

The people of Stalingrad showed no reluctance about talking of the horrors they had endured. They were filled with wonder and joy at being alive, and the exhilaration of victory was still upon

them. But as the word for Leningrad was *krasota* (beauty), so the word for Stalingrad was *strashno* (horrible). Here it was not a question of saving historical monuments and buildings, but of saving the very land itself. Theirs had been a beautiful city, too, but in a different way. There were no treasures of the past—Tsaritsyn, the old town, had been an ancient merchant's city, with narrow streets, zigzagging and inconvenient. Stalingrad, the new industrial city, was a product of their own hands and toil, and—what was left—of their blood. They had fought for every street, for every house, for every room—and then for every pile of bricks and stones and earth.

Lopatov reviewed for me those five nightmare weeks when 225,000 bombs fell on the city. Fuel storage tanks at the northern end were hit and a flood of burning oil and gas poured down the Volga, and river and city alike were a raging mass of flames. Through that inferno they evacuated hundreds of thousands of people to the opposite bank.

"Do you know the kind of thing that I remember most clearly?" Lopatov reminisced. "I was on the shore, directing evacuation, and a woman came down to the Volga to get water, carrying two pails over her shoulders. She started back with the water and then the bombers came over. The shock of the explosions knocked her down, spilling her buckets. She got up again and said, 'So much water in the Volga and I cannot get any of it.' We tried to get her to shelter. But she turned back to the river, dipped her pails again, and carried them away while the bombs were still falling—she said she was making soup for the soldiers and they had to have it. The heroism of our women was as important to our victory as the heroism of the soldiers."

After the liberation the people streamed back into their city. Within a short time, 260,000 had returned. No matter that they had no homes—they were home. They dug out what belongings they could find beneath the ruins, set up housekeeping in caves or under the open sky. The first task was to clean up the debris and get rid of the German corpses—there were 135,000 of them—and to bury their own dead. The whole population took part; they had to hurry because the water was already polluted.

"Our women were very angry when they had to pick up the dead Germans," said Lopatov. "The living Germans brought us so much grief,' they said, 'and now even when they are dead they

still want to bring harm to us!" Lopatov described vividly the early days of the reconstruction of Stalingrad:

"There was so much to be done! Our ruined industries had to be restored, and housing and schools and hospitals and the water system and electric power and transportation. It was like creating the world anew out of chaos. But it took more than seven days! When we started the first bakeries, the dough had to be mixed in bathtubs from bombed out houses. The first classes were held in ruined schools, the children sitting there in their coats, the wind blowing their hair and papers about. Then gifts started pouring in from all over the U.S.S.R. We felt the love of the whole country. There were carloads of parts for the tractor factory, carloads of glass, carloads of lumber, bales of clothing, dolls for our children, shoes—all made by overtime work by workers already doing overtime for the front. Everything was marked 'Our thanks to Stalingrad's heroes.' Collective farmers throughout the region sent us food. Then a call went out for the Komsomols, and young people from the whole country poured into Stalingrad. They came marching through the streets, singing. Who in Stalingrad can ever forget them? They started living with us in the rubble, in dugouts, in a tent city beyond the town. A group of girls set up house in a wrecked Junker. They learned new trades, they manned the machines in our factories. How we rejoiced that spring and summer when, in the warm nights, they danced with the youth of Stalingrad in the big open square of the tractor factory and in the blasted city parks—how wonderful it was to see that our young people could be happy again. Many have stayed and have become part of our town, now and forever."

Lopatov outlined their new plan for the reconstruction of Stalingrad. "It will take ten, or more likely fifteen years, to rebuild our city. We're convinced Stalingrad can be rebuilt as we want it to be, just as we were convinced that the Germans would never take it."

As I went to bed later, in the night from somewhere among the ruins a lovely voice rose practicing scales. In the morning I woke to the sound of a Bach prelude on the piano. But a more persistent sound competed with it—the sound of hammering. That is the chief music of Stalingrad today, the sound of building.

Katya, our waitress, had enlisted in the army as a cook at the beginning of the war. She had helped to feed Red Army men

all through the siege of Stalingrad and had then gone with them all the way through Poland and Germany to Berlin. I asked Marusia, the chambermaid, what she had been doing during the Stalingrad battles.

"I had my two little children and an old mother to take care of. I was afraid to send them across the river, because so many people got killed by German bombs on the way. So we sat in a deep hole and ate horses until the worst was over. . . ."

After breakfast Lopatov appeared, bringing with him the secretary of the Stalingrad Soviet. In the daylight I saw the full picture of the unbelievable ruins of the city. We walked through the "Square of Fallen Fighters," once a verdant, flower-filled park, surrounded by fine modern buildings—now only blasted trees are left standing, their tops blown off, their stumps riddled with bullet holes. I stood by the "Comrades' Grave" covered with fresh wreaths and flowers, and watched the children from a nearby kindergarten playing in the empty bowl of a broken fountain. I walked in the once bullet-swept streets, where so many times the Red Army tried unsuccessfully to attack until, when they finally learned that von Paulus was there, nothing could hold them back. I saw the big department store in whose cellar von Paulus surrendered. Pointing to the piles of ruins, Lopatov said: "This was a fine hotel, this a big apartment house, here was the handsome Komsomol movie theater. Over there the Gorky Dramatic Theater." The only whole building for blocks around was a big school, restored and in use. In the backyard of a ruined building was an open-air movie house, the first "cultural institution" to be reopened. Its seating was wooden stools. "The place was jammed the night it opened," Lopatov told us. "The children perched like birds on the shattered walls and windows all around."

We went down to the river shore, swept now by an icy wind, past the ruins of the former Palace of Pioneers and the former Palace of Trade Unions. Entrance ways, every conceivable spot that could be used as shelter, had been patched up to make temporary living quarters. Twisted, broken stairways led into empty sky, sections of rooms hung crazily in mid-air. A pit along the shore was the site of a large house where a direct hit had killed all the women and children in the cellar.

A sign on a heap of rubble read: "No. 1 Ulitsa Lenina." Looking closer, I saw this was a human habitation. There was no

street here and no houses. But the Kuznetsovs had lived in the building that had stood there. Coming back, they had dug a cave in the rubble, made a doorway and a window, fashioned a stove and a metal chimney, which held the board containing their address. Above the board rose two poles on which were perched two little bird houses. Lopatov wanted to take me inside to visit the Kuznetsovs, but they were out.

We rode out some twenty miles northward to the tractor works. Leaving the center of the city we began to see more new building. On the outskirts were many new small houses. Some were solidly built, others looked like our Hoovervilles.

On our way we passed by the hill known as Mamayev Kurgan, never yielded to the Germans, and to that narrow strip of beach below it, from which General Chuikov directed the final battle that saved Stalingrad and the world. I got out of the car to stand on that consecrated soil which the Germans had come so many blood-drenched miles to seize. Fifteen hundred miles they had come—but the last 150 yards they could not take. For here the Red Army took its stand and said, “Not one step back—there is no land beyond the Volga!” and here they stood and fought and gained the precious time that enabled the two great armies under Rokossovsky and Yeremenko to make their junction in the snowy steppes outside of Stalingrad, encircling the German armies, and turning the tide of the whole war.

On Mamayev Kurgan hill, every inch of the ground was sown with lead. “We were faced with the problem of cleaning it up,” Lopatov told us. “But our visitors are doing the job for us. This is where they get their souvenirs from Stalingrad!” A column of forlorn-looking German prisoners came shuffling along. I saw them everywhere around Stalingrad, and wondered what they thought, working among the ruins they had made, some of which still bore crudely painted prophetic slogans: “Down with the hated German fascists, their army, their government, their cursed new order!”

Lopatov stopped the car to point out the famous Pavlov House on January 9 Place. This house had been surrounded by Germans. Only a tiny passageway was open, where by night, food and munitions could be carried through the trenches to its defenders. There with his men was Sergeant Pavlov, one of Stalingrad’s most beloved heroes. They wrote on the house front: “In

this house the Germans have no permission to live." Throughout the battle of Stalingrad no German entered there.

The building was the first in Stalingrad to be restored by Cherkassova and her brigades. Cherkassova was a kindergarten teacher who had worked as a war nurse. Right after liberation she started her kindergarten again. She had to walk five miles back and forth to her work every day, and take care of her two young children; yet, after her regular work was over, she organized women to lay bricks, to do carpentry and painting, to give their extra hours to the rebuilding of Stalingrad. All over the country women followed this example and organized "Cherkassovite brigades."

As we approached the factory, we drove through the shambles of what had once been its workers' town. A new city was rising here, with eight-family apartment houses already up, two new school buildings, a hospital, and club.

At the tractor factory we were greeted by Yuri Grozny, assistant director, Sergei Filatov, assistant chief engineer, and Nikolai Shakunov, chairman of the trade union committee. In the machine department a demobilized soldier, in a somewhat worn uniform, showed us around. Grozny apologized for him: "He will not look like this a year from now." I told him there was no need to apologize to an American for anything in Stalingrad. Then he pointed disparagingly to some refuse piles. "Not like in America!" he said. No, not like America. We didn't have the war in our own front yard.

Before the war the tractor works had produced hundreds of thousands of tractors for Soviet agriculture. In 1929, on empty steppe land, they began to build the tractor plant as part of the first Five-Year Plan. People came from all over the U.S.S.R. to help, among them seven thousand Komsomol volunteers. American engineers and workers took part. Here worked John Calder, the tall, lanky engineer from Detroit. His name became a symbol in the Soviet Union for the finest type of American, and they still remember him in Stalingrad. The factory was completed nine months before the American engineers had said it could be done. On June 17, 1930, the first tractor came off the assembly line. For the first seven years they made International wheel type tractors—209,000 of them. They did not prove sturdy enough for early plowing in deep mud under Russian conditions. So they switched to the American caterpillar type, worked out improvements and

developed a tractor twice as powerful and better adapted to Russian conditions. Their production was ten times over the Plan and way beyond the maximum estimates of the American engineers.

When the German army reached Stalingrad, the tractor factory was producing tanks and other equipment for the front.

"On August 23, 1942," Grozny told me, "the opening attack came unexpectedly in the direction of our plant. The front was still about sixty miles away, and there were few regular troops in the city. Suddenly we heard the Germans were only a few miles away. Our whole collective—workers, technicians, engineers, management—jumped to the defense. We finished the tanks we were making and drove them right out of the factory gates into battle. The workers of our factory took the first blow against Stalingrad. We not only held—we pushed the Germans back a little. The neighboring factories—the Red October Metallurgical Plant and the Barricade Machine Building Plant joined the defense. We held the Germans for three days until regular troops arrived. Some of our workers were evacuated so that their skill could be used elsewhere, but many stayed. The Germans got into the factory but we held parts of it all through. Many of our workers perished, among them the commander of our people's guards, the engineer Vinchugorov. In one building a young girl held the Germans off with her machine gun until they ran over her with a tank."

All over the factory grounds, among ruins and reconstruction, graves were pointed out to me of workers buried where they had fallen. The day after liberation, the workers streamed back to the destroyed plant. They repaired tanks under the open sky, lettering "Stalingrad's Answer" on them and sending them back to the front. Then the decision was made to start restoring the Stalingrad Tractor Plant and again, as in the early days, young people came from all over the Soviet Union to help. Many stayed on and we saw them beside their machines. By the November anniversary, just passed, they had produced their three thousandth tractor. They painted it bright red and entered it in the parade. I saw it standing in the factory yard, still bedecked with banners and slogans. Their present daily output was 30 tractors. (By the end of 1947 they had reached the pre-war level of 200 a day.) At the same time, as in all the other factories, they were producing household goods. They wanted to give me a memento to take back to America. First they brought an iron, but since I could

not add so much weight to my baggage, we settled on a tablespoon.

Shakunov informed me that the trade union, in addition to routine problems of wages, hours, vacations, etc., was concentrating on restoring normal living conditions for the workers, to see that there are enough bath houses, restaurants, sewing rooms, shoe repair shops, barber shops, polyclinics, children's institutions. They maintain a sanitarium for their workers near Sochi, a rest home across the river, and a children's camp accommodating two thousand, in the nearby countryside. They are also restoring cultural facilities they had before the war.

"We have our own sailboats on the Volga again," Shakunov told me. "We have a water sport base on the river and a bathing beach. We are rebuilding our sport stadium. We have twelve departmental football teams. The best players were sent to Moscow to play in the All-Union games. Our team ranked seventh among thirty-six contenders. We'll do better next time. We have our hunting club—there's plenty of wild game in this region—foxes, wolves, ducks, hares, geese. Fishing too—you know the Volga has the best fish in the world!"

Asked about relations between the management and trade unions, Shakunov put it this way: "We have many disputes, but we find a common tongue. Both management and trade union officials have to report regularly to the workers. They jump on us both—they speak freely—that is our strength! The management understands our problems, because all of them have been workers themselves."

The director, Nikita Prosvirov, had started in the factory years ago as a bricklayer. He studied while he worked, and became in turn foreman, department chief, forgerman, engineer. When the factory started up again after Stalingrad's liberation, he was appointed its director.

We were invited to a workers' meeting that evening. The large club auditorium was crowded; the director and other members of the administration and the trade union officials sat together on the platform. The workers spoke out freely on the lag in housing. New apartments were going up too slowly and workers who were putting up houses of their own weren't getting needed materials in time. Their complaints were also about the factory restaurants—service was slow and they had to queue up for a table. They complained that the cultural work wasn't

developing fast enough. Trade union officials and management promised improvements by the next monthly meeting.

Some of the skilled workers complained of the bookkeepers' entries on wages. The director answered that he had had the accounts checked and they were accurate. He cited workers who were receiving 2,500, 3,000 and 4,000 rubles a month. "Some of you who are complaining have simply not been producing as much. It is a matter of your own work—not bookkeeping mistakes!" I was interested to hear with what complete freedom the workers spoke up on anything that was on their minds.

Following the gripe session, the workers discussed the "socialist" obligations they had undertaken. They had pledged: (1) to produce twenty tractors above the program; (2) to produce the Diesel motor ahead of time; (3) to increase labor productivity by twenty per cent; (4) to increase the number of people working several lathes at once by 200; (5) to fulfill all plans for production of consumers' goods; (6) to study to raise their qualifications; (7) to complete the plan for winter food supplies. The points were all discussed and voted on each in turn.

Before the end of the meeting, the director introduced the "visitor from America." They insisted that I speak in Russian. In a most inadequate and stumbling way, I tried to convey something of America's gratitude to the fighters and workers of Stalingrad. Shakunin, trade union committee chairman, responded on behalf of the workers: "We are heartily thankful for your greetings from American workers. You have seen with your own eyes what the Hitlerite beasts have done in Stalingrad. Please tell the American people that our workers will be just as heroic in the reconstruction as they were in battle. On behalf of all the workers and engineers of our plant, I want to send warmest greetings to the American people. I know it is not only my own opinion but the opinion of all our collective that we must strengthen our friendship in order to strengthen peace and smash all the remnants of fascism throughout the world. Long live the new world organization, the United Nations!"

Following the meeting came entertainment. There was a gay little farce, well acted by a fitter, chauffeur, forgerman, and other workers. After some concert numbers, the factory jazz band played dance music and some of the younger people started what looked very much like jitterbugging.

Lopatov had told me of the wonderful work of the Stalingrad girls who night after night had risked their lives crossing the front lines into enemy territory, danced with the German officers in the clubs, and came back and reported everything—enemy losses, the number of their tanks, their battery positions.

He brought one of these courageous young women in to see me. She was Taya Yakovleva, one of the oldest of the group that had done this difficult and dangerous work. She was thirty years old, with very fair hair and broad high Slavic cheek bones—not a beauty, but with a lovely serenity and candor in her wide-set hazel eyes. She had begun working in a clothing factory as an apprentice at seventeen. While at work she took a correspondence course, attended technicum, was promoted to department head and then assistant commercial director of the factory. Volunteering after Stalin's speech of July 1941, she was sent to the front. She was attached to a group of parachutists operating in the rear of the German lines in the Ukraine. She had made sixty parachute jumps. Usually the parachutists were taken in little planes that could be hidden in grainfields, to their objective, where they carried out some dangerous mission and then were flown back. Now, sitting with me in my hotel room, she talked about it as calmly as though this was nothing out of the ordinary. Her brother, doing similar work, was tortured and hanged by the Germans because he would not give them information. Her mother and sisters had died in the Stalingrad bombings. In July of 1943 Taya came to Stalingrad with a group of girls who worked as scouts. To my question as to how she had prepared herself for this perilous work, she replied:

"I have always enjoyed athletics, and was on my trade union's ski and track teams. That helped. I had learned parachute jumping too—as a sport—I never dreamed I would use it in war."

She went on: "To cross over into the German lines meant we had to know every inch of our own and the German defense lines. All Stalingrad was mined. Before we went on our expeditions we had to memorize the map showing just which sections were mined by us and which by the Germans, and learn every detail by heart. Then we had to burn it up so it would not be found on us. Often we had to crawl along the ground for hours. Inside the German lines, we had to have a story ready. Sometimes I dressed up as an old woman and pretended to be looking for my lost

children. Sometimes I made up as a tart and flirted with the officers. That wasn't nice work. I couldn't even let our own people know what I was up to and that was hardest of all. We fulfilled our tasks, brought back the information, and General Chuikov, knowing what forces the Germans had, could make his plans. We talked casually to the soldiers, asked what the officers would be doing that evening—were they having parties, were they taking baths—each little detail was significant. We also had to find out about our Stalingrad people inside the German lines. Many, at the risk of their lives, took in the wounded, gave them civilian clothes, and fed and nursed them. Toward the end, we had to find out whether von Paulus had arrived in the center of the city. I got through and brought back the information, but two girls who went with me were killed.”

How had she found strength to endure it all?

“My physical training helped to pull me through it. But I feel much older than my thirty years. After all, women are not meant for such work. I have been given a post in the Commissariat of Social Security, helping to look after the needs of the returning soldiers. This is good, peaceful work. I like it.”

In Stalingrad, as in Gorky, they had kept a special surprise for the end of my visit. Lopatov ceremoniously escorted me to a small room in the building of the Stalingrad Soviet. Here, with an honor guard, were kept the gifts and scrolls, tributes to the bravery of Stalingrad received from many nations. Here was the sword that was the gift of the King of England, presented to Stalin at Teheran. And here, in the place of honor, was the scroll sent by President Roosevelt:

“In the name of the people of the United States of America I present this scroll to the City of Stalingrad to commemorate our admiration for its gallant defenders, whose courage, fortitude and devotion during the siege of September 13, 1942, to January 31, 1943, will inspire forever the hearts of all free people.

“Their glorious victory stemmed the tide of the invasion and marked the turning point in the war of the Allied Nations against the forces of aggression.

*“Franklin Delano Roosevelt
“May 17, 1944”*

CHAPTER VI

BAKU: CITY OF OIL AND CULTURE

I had decided to go on to Baku, capital of the Transcaucasian Soviet Republic of Azerbaidzhan, as a good place to see the Soviet nationality policy in action.

At the Stalingrad airport, we found the regular Baku plane had been delayed by bad weather. A bucket seat plane had just come in, however, and was taking off immediately. I jumped in at once, despite the warnings of my Stalingrad hosts that I would be cold and uncomfortable. My heart sank for a moment when we got in. The metal floor was very cold. The others in the plane were bundled up in warm coats and valenkis while I, headed for the South (I thought), was dressed rather lightly. That in itself spotted me as an American. There was a sudden shifting around, the most comfortable places in the plane were vacated and Ksana and I, our protests ignored, were deposited in them.

In the plane were some demobilized Red Army soldiers who insisted on wrapping their greatcoats round us. A young Armenian officer took upon himself the special responsibility of looking after our comfort. He was returning home after four and a half years' absence. He had fought on many fronts and taken part in the storming of Berlin. A dark, handsome fellow, with flashing black eyes and hair graying a little over the temples, he was embarrassed at not having had a shave and kept rubbing his chin and apologizing that it was "inconvenient" to appear like this before a foreigner. He was one of the most courteous human beings I have ever met. Replying to a question about the weather in Baku, he said the very name "Baku" came from an old Persian word meaning winds and told us this legend:

"Long ago the local Emir took tribute from the merchants who came to sell their wares at Baku. But the Iranians who came, being akin to the Azerbaidzhanians in both physiognomy and language, pretended to be Azerbaidzhanians in order to avoid paying tribute. The Emir's revenue was diminishing but he had a hard time proving that the Iranians were not really Azerbaidzhanians. One day he called all the merchants together in the courtyard of his palace and asked, 'How many seasons are there in the year?' One spoke up: 'Four seasons, of course—spring, summer, autumn, winter.' So the Emir said, 'All who agree with this please step over to the right side of the courtyard.' Almost all of them went over to that side. The Emir turned to the small group on the left and asked: 'And you, how many seasons do you think there are in the year?' An old merchant with a long beard answered: 'Have it any way you like, but I think there are two seasons—winter when the wind blows from the North and summer when the wind blows from the South.' The merchants on the other side laughed loudly at such ignorance, but the little group standing around the old man nodded their heads sagely. And the Emir said: 'Now I know who the real Azerbaidzhanians are—the rest of you will have to pay tribute—you are Iranians.' And so it was— and the Emir grew rich again."

All through the trip our Armenian officer argued with us and others about philosophy, politics, art, the atom bomb. "It's good to have disputes," said our officer. "It's good to know cold and warmth and grief and joy and all that life has to offer, and to talk about many things."

When we reached Baku, it was snowing, and quite as windy as our Red Army officer had promised. The bus drove us through forests of oil derricks into the city. Presently we arrived at one of the finest hotels I have seen in the U.S.S.R. Our modernly decorated, comfortable room had a balcony overlooking the bay, and, best of all, plenty of hot water.

After a delicious meal, Vishniakov, from the Azerbaidzhanian Foreign Ministry and also the local representative of V.O.K.S., came to welcome us and find out what we wanted to see in Baku. With him came Aligasan Shakh'yeldiev, vice chairman of A.Z.O.K.S., the Azerbaidzhanian Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. Sahmed Vurgun, its poet president, was away during my visit. The Azerbaidzhanian Society had been or-

ganized in accordance with the move to develop independent relations for the Union Republics with other countries. Shakhmurov, a captain in the war, had only recently been demobilized. Once an oil worker, he had become a writer, and was now working on his war memoirs. He had served in the Caucasus, helping to keep the rich prize of the Baku oil fields, the objective of the Nazi High Command's southern offensives, out of the hands of the enemy. He too had been in the storming of Berlin. He did not wear the many decorations I was told he had. He was an extraordinarily handsome man, with the melting dark eyes of his people and a classic Greek profile.

THE CULTURAL LIFE OF AZERBAIDZHAN

That evening we were taken to the Philharmonic Theater. The program opened with a group of Azerbaidzhanian songs, folk and classical, followed by a "sazist" orchestra (balalaika-like national instrument). The "sazist" players were lovely dark Azerbaidzhanian women, dressed in graceful costumes of yellow and blue silk, with veils flowing from bands on their heads.

During intermission, we were welcomed by the director of the Philharmonic, Zamil Halil, a gifted poet and playwright whose latest play was running in one of the Baku theaters. From him we learned that Baku has eleven repertory companies, five Azerbaidzhanian, four Russian, one Armenian, and one Jewish, and that there were at least five important companies in other parts of the Azerbaidzhanian Republic as well as numerous small ones in clubs and collective farms. From him I gained a sense of the rich cultural life of Baku, whose young poets and dramatists, he felt, were not only making an important contribution to their own national culture, but would be heard of more and more in the cultural life of the Soviet Union as a whole. He spoke with special warmth of Sahmed Vurgun whose volume of war poems, *Today and Tomorrow*, has since come out in Russian translation. Vurgun was known far beyond literary circles; his people had elected him deputy to the Supreme Soviet.

The second half of the program was a performance of the delightful "Svadba," the traditional Azerbaidzhanian marriage celebration—the elaborate wedding preparations, the bringing in of the bride and groom, the exquisite dancing and singing that

follows, and the symbolic rituals. The girls were dark, slender beauties, with their softly gliding walk, the proud carriage of their heads. Characteristic of Azerbaidzhanian dancing is the use of the hands, with their beautifully shaped, slim, tapered fingers, like the dipping flight of swallows.

The following morning I had the privilege of meeting Azerbaidzhan's leading composer, Uzir Gadzhibekov. Beloved throughout Soviet Azerbaidzhan, in October, his sixtieth birthday and fortieth year of creative work had been honored with national celebration. Gadzhibekov bridges the ancient but formerly imprisoned folklore of his country, on which he draws heavily for his themes, and the full liberation and growth of that culture which the Soviet era has made possible. Initiator of Azerbaidzhanian operatic art and a pioneer in the musical education of his people, he now heads the Azerbaidzhanian State Conservatory. He himself had studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory since there had been no possibility of getting a musical education in the Azerbaidzhan of tsarist times. Gadzhibekov had composed ten operas, operettas and other major works, and was now at work on an opera and a symphonic poem. He had written a war cantata and his *Hymn of Azerbaidzhan* had been chosen out of thirty-six others as the national anthem. Best loved of all his works is the folk opera, *Ker Ogly*, first shown in 1937, slated to be added to the repertory of the Moscow opera. A poet and dramatist, he writes the librettos to his own operas. He is working on a scientific exposition of the polyphony of Azerbaidzhanian music, to make it more accessible to other musicians. He had also written a mathematics textbook, and an Azerbaidzhanian-Russian and Russian-Azerbaidzhanian dictionary. He is a member of the Azerbaidzhanian Academy of Sciences, and a deputy to the Supreme Soviet.

Gadzhibekov was far more interested in showing off the accomplishments of his students than in talking about himself. His office, with a grand piano in one corner, became an impromptu concert hall as he called in gifted students to perform for me on violin and piano, some of them to play their own compositions.

A ten-year school is housed in the same building as the Conservatory. There musically gifted young Azerbaidzhanians from all over the republic prepare for the Conservatory while getting their general education. A large proportion of the fifty

students studying to be composers were girls, I was informed.

Gadzhibekov requested me to take a message to the musicians of America:

"Our whole life, the whole rich culture of our country," he said, "is based on the people, on its folk art. Folk music provides the basis for the further growth of the imagination. The harmonies of our people have come alive under the impetus the Soviet government has given to our national culture, and I believe they will live forever, and help to create a new era not only in our own but in world music.

"We are interested in receiving American musical works, and will be glad to send them ours. Our own Soviet peoples have come to know and love each other better through cultural interchanges. After other Soviet peoples had seen our art at the ten-day festival of our national Azerbaidzhan art in Moscow, they said, 'Now we understand and love the Azerbaidzhanian people better.' And equally when we see the work of our brother republics, we love them better. I have seen the art of the Armenians, the Kirgiz, the Tadzhiks, the Kazakhs and other peoples, and because of it I know and love these people. This constant cultural exchange among all our peoples has added immeasurably to our closeness and understanding of each other.

"We would like America to know more about us, not as a matter of national pride, but because we feel we have something to give America, and we know America has much to give us. By interchange we can enrich each other's culture; we can cement the bonds of friendship between your people and ours. Music is a universal language, and I believe that if we speak this language to each other, we shall reach an understanding that will transcend our minor differences and help us together to find the way to world peace."

Visiting the exquisite little Nizami Museum, crowded with workers' groups, school children, and others, I saw a further illustration of Azerbaidzhanian cultural development. The building is itself a work of art, with its graceful architecture and statuary, and the delicate tracery of its internal decor. The Museum is divided into three sections, one devoted to Azerbaidzhanian culture before the era of their great national poet, Nizami, who lived in the twelfth century; the second to the general Azerbaidzhanian culture and scientific development in the time of Nizami, and the

third, to the life and creative work of Nizami himself. At the same time it reflects the cultural life of today since the best architects, painters, and archeologists have all made their contribution to it.

In the Baku Palace of Labor run by the trade union of the oil workers of the Lenin Oil Trust, I saw how the humblest Azerbaidzhanian worker has the opportunity to develop potential creative gifts. This club (one of many), serves several thousand oil workers. Its membership, a large percentage of which are women, includes both Azerbaidzhanian and Russian workers, with a sprinkling of other nationalities.

In addition to its technical and general cultural courses, the club has eleven amateur circles. In these Azerbaidzhanians and Russians, separately or together, sing, dance, and perform instrumental music, for which professional instruction is provided. There are literary circles in both languages; and circles where the women learn fancy sewing and embroidery, or receive instruction in domestic science and child care. I watched rehearsals by an Azerbaidzhanian dramatic circle, a folk instrument ensemble preparing a performance of a native operetta, a Russian string orchestra, a mixed Russian and Azerbaidzhanian chorus trying out selections from Tchaikowsky operas, and a mixed jazz band doing Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." Gershwin's music had taken the town by storm. Azerbaidzhanian music lovers found in it an affinity with their native spirit and themes.

In the club house auditorium, the white silk shawls of the Azerbaidzhanian women mingled with the bright red berets of young Komsomol girls of various nationalities: and uniforms of recently returned soldiers mingled with rough oil workers' suits. They were hearing the same performance by the same musicians and dancers I had seen in Baku's main concert hall the night I arrived; one or two nights a week they perform at workers' clubs.

Several of the leading figures in Azerbaidzhan's cultural life had received their start at this club, among them Captain Shakh'yeldiev, who had begun his writing career in its literary circle.

The club's activities included assisting younger workers catch up on schooling interrupted by war, organizing sport and other entertainment, putting on plays for children, organizing a puppet group, and providing after-school care. On holidays, children may be taken care of at the club all day. The club library has

a collection of Azerbaidzhanian, Russian, and Armenian books, and sends nine traveling libraries out into the oil fields.

The chairman of the trade union committee was a woman. She told me that the trade union's present chief concern is improving living and cultural conditions. Baku's famous blocks of workers' apartment houses had deteriorated during the war. The objective was to restore and then improve pre-war living standards.

At the Dramatic Theater I saw Sahmed Vurgun's philosophical play, *Insan* (Man). Written during the war, it dealt with the postwar world. The content was somewhat too complex to come through to me clearly by the time it reached its third language. (It was translated from Azerbaidzhanian into Russian to Ksana, who retranslated it in English to me—all in whispers.) But from its philosophic depth and warm humanity, I received an impression of Vurgun as a towering figure, both as an artist and as a human being.

At the same theater, we saw *Fog over Tavriz*, an exciting play about early revolutionary events in Iran, written by Ordubadi, one of their foremost playwrights of the older generation.

The repertory of the Dramatic Theater included *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. I asked the director which were most popular.

"*Hamlet* and *Othello*," he informed me. "Our Azerbaidzhanian people like heroic drama and tragedies best—they do not take to comedies so well. We are now preparing to introduce *Twelfth Night*. I'm not sure how it will be received—we'll see!"

Between the acts, many of the writers, poets, and musicians present at the performance came to our box. These young people of Azerbaidzhan were a stimulating group, full of plans for the future, excited by the creative life of Azerbaidzhan and intensely desirous of cultural contacts with the rest of the world.

Among them was the composer Niazi, whose name I had already heard. He is the Leonard Bernstein of Baku—a composer, conductor, pianist, and I don't know what else. A slight young fellow, ardent and dynamic, he was embarrassed that evening because he had on a rumpled suit and sport shirt. "I didn't know there would be foreign guests—or I should have dressed up!" He was writing the music for a historical film; he was conducting several nights a week at the opera house; he was working on a new opera. In addition he was a soccer fan and

could not repress his glee over the recent victory of the Soviet soccer team at Cardiff, Wales. I asked him how in the world he found time for so many interests. He laughed. "To be a good composer—one must experience everything in life!"

Since the play we were seeing had to do with Iran, it was natural that the situation in that country should come into the conversation. At that time Soviet troops were still in occupation, according to the terms of the treaty, and the issue had not yet been brought before the Security Council in the attempt to organize world opinion against the Soviet Union. I did not know how the situation was being played up in the world press at the time but I had seen a few pieces in Soviet papers about the movement for greater democracy among the people of northern Iran.

My friends at the theater gave me some examples of the close cultural contacts they were developing with the people of Iranian Azerbaidzhan. They told me of delegations of visitors from North Iran to Baku, and the requests for tours by operatic and theater companies from Soviet Azerbaidzhan. They were following closely the democratic movement in northern Iran where for the first time the people were enjoying a degree of local autonomy, organizing schools in their native language, carrying out land and other reforms. In these efforts the Red Army of occupation was giving them practical help—fighting off a locust plague, anti-malarial work, swamp clearance, road building.

I made a serious faux pas: "Is there a separatist movement in Iranian Azerbaidzhan—any movement among their people to join with Soviet Azerbaidzhan?"

Everyone jumped on me at once.

"Certainly not! The Azerbaidzhanians living in northern Iran have no desire to separate from their country. Naturally we are interested in developments there. These people are our brothers; we have a common past. But what is important to us and to them is that there be a unified and democratic Iran, with whom we can have close economic and cultural ties and good neighborly relations. It would weaken Iran as a whole if Azerbaidzhan were separated from it. We do not want weak neighbors, who could be a prey of other powers and internal divisions. We want strong, peaceful neighbors. And the Azerbaidzhanian people in Iran want to be a part of a strong nation. They want autonomy, yes, the chance for the first time to develop a modern economy

and their own culture. We will gladly help them in that. But intervention in the affairs of Iran would be counter to our whole policy."

"But perhaps," I ventured, "in spite of your policy, the Azerbaidzhanians in Iran, seeing your economic and cultural development, may want to become a part of it, may want to have a Soviet government of their own?"

"Naturally the Azerbaidzhanians in Iran may contrast what they see in our country with the corrupt feudal regime in their own country maintained in power by the foreign oil imperialists. Perhaps that is the kind of 'intervention' the oil imperialists really fear when they accuse us of trying to take over Iran. But we have no such intention. We would like oil concessions in the North, for which we have offered better terms than the English have ever given. We should benefit from the oil, because we used up much of our reserves in the war. The concessions would be developed so that they would contribute to the economy of northern Iran, and everything would, in the end, revert back to the Iranians themselves. We would certainly like to see the democratic forces in Azerbaidzhan win, as they would if real non-intervention were observed by all the powers. Only foreign influence has kept the reactionary feudal groups in power. But it is not a question of Sovietization. The people of Iran are now taking only their first steps out of their feudal past."

SCIENTIST AND HUMANIST

Dr. Mir-Assadulla Mir-Kassimov, if he were known beyond the borders of his native country, would surely be counted among the great of the world. He was a warm, exuberant, wonderful character, with the modesty characteristic of true greatness. The foremost surgeon of Azerbaidzhan, he had recently been elevated to what was considered, next to the head of the government, the highest office in the country, president of the Azerbaidzhanian Academy of Sciences. On visits into the countryside to perform an operation, the people swarm around him, and show their love in that peculiar way common to all the peoples of the U.S.S.R.—by tossing him up into the air.

In the life story of Mir-Assadulla Mir-Kassimov is the essence of the nationality policy of the Soviet Union.

"I was one of only five or six of all my countrymen who managed to get a medical education in tsarist times," he told me. "In those days a great deal of attention was paid to who was a Jew, who an Armenian, who an Azerbaidzhanian. I applied for a medical post in Odessa. I wrote my name at the bottom of the application. The official squinted at it. 'Where are you from?' he asked. 'From Azerbaidzhan,' I told him. 'Oh,' he grunted, 'an *inorodets*' (non-Russian, foreigner). 'In that case we have no work for you.' For a long time I had difficulty practicing my profession though doctors were desperately needed in Russia."

When I asked Mir-Kassimov what he considered was the most striking change that had come about in Azerbaidzhan since the Revolution, he said the fact that a people who had been almost completely illiterate a quarter of a century ago had now established their own Academy of Sciences.

"Before 1920," he continued, "only three per cent of all our people could read and write. Soon our entire population—excepting only the very old—will be literate. What does this mean? The gems of literature and philosophy created by our poets and thinkers in the past were known in the palaces of the shahs and sultans, but not to the people. Today our people know the works of the brilliant poet Nizami of Ganja and other great figures of the past. Our new alphabet has opened a path for our people to the treasures of world literature as well. Above all, new creative talents have been released in our people. In the past our literature was tragic because of the sorrows of our people. Now our art and literature are permeated with optimism, with a new spirit. This is because their roots center in the life of our regenerated people, from whom have sprung novelists, poets, dramatists, actors, artists, sculptors, musicians, singers, dancers.

"Our school attendance in Azerbaidzhan today is six times what it was in 1914. There was not a single higher educational institution in our country before the Revolution—there are fourteen today, and more than sixty institutions engaged in scientific research. When our first university was founded in 1920, there was not one Azerbaidzhanian among its fifteen professors and docents. Today there are 142 professors and 418 docents in our Republic."

Mir-Kassimov said that to him, as a physician, the improvements in health protection in the last twenty-five years seemed

miraculous. Improved living and working conditions had sharply reduced the disease rate. Children's infectious diseases had dropped by nearly two-thirds. Infant mortality had been more than halved. Malaria, trachoma, skin and venereal diseases were no longer scourges. There had been a tenfold increase in hospital beds. An extensive network exists of polyclinics and dispensaries, maternity homes, women's and children's consultation centers, creches, anti-epidemic and anti-malaria stations, medical-aid points at industrial enterprises, and in the villages. Even mountain hamlets far from railroads enjoyed modern medical care.

This type of information is familiar to anyone who has examined the health protection system of the Soviet Union even casually. I cite it here to show that such arrangements may be found wherever one travels in the U.S.S.R.

"As a physician," Mir-Kassimov went on, "I am especially interested in our Institute of Experimental Medicine. Tropical malaria has always been one of our main problems. Formerly we were concerned mostly with its treatment and cure. Now we are working on prevention, covering our mosquito-breeding swamp lands with oil sprinkled from airplanes. We are carrying on similar preventive work against other diseases. We are also studying the mineral springs which abound in Azerbaidzhan, and organizing new spas. Our 'Istissu' is a hot mineral water which is as good as Karlsbad."

In recounting the facts he told me, I cannot begin to invest them with the warmth and love with which every item was cited by this grand old man.

Discussing the women of Azerbaidzhan, Mir-Kassimov told us: "Every year more and more are coming into scientific fields. They follow in the footsteps of the men. No, that's not correct! Actually, they are not following us, they are inundating us like waves! In 1922 there were only two women in our medical institute. Now fifty or sixty are graduated every year."

The Academy of Sciences does research, he informed us, in geology and chemistry, electric power and physics, botany and zoology, soil science and agronomy, history and philosophy, language and literature, economics and geography, the arts and medicine.

"Of course, since our main local resource is oil, it is one of the chief concerns of the Academy. We kept our oil out of Hitler's

hands—but it was seriously depleted, and must be built up in the new Five-Year Plan. Our oil institute is prospecting new wells and improving methods of drilling and refining.

“The Caspian Sea is gradually drying up. Now a special commission is studying how to check this, to save our fishing industry. I’m sure the whole world would miss our caviar! There are great reserves of oil in the depths of the sea, too.

“Iron and manganese deposits have been discovered in our mountains, over 5,000 feet above sea level. New iron mines are already operating in Dashkesan, which is becoming an industrial center.

“Mingechaur Valley presents a fascinating problem. There two rivers cascade down the mountains. For years their energy has gone to waste. Now we will use it for power and irrigation. A dam will be erected where the Kura River enters the plain through a gorge at the village of Mingechaur. This will form an artificial lake 31 miles long, holding 600 billion cubic feet of water, enough to irrigate some 275,000 acres. This irrigated area can raise enough grain to feed all Transcaucasia. The capacity of the power plant to be erected there will be second, in the U.S.S.R., only to the Dnieper Station, which is the largest in Europe. At the same time, the threat of floods will end, and malaria breeding marshes will be eliminated. “The region is full of relics of our ancient culture. Many of our young archeologists are excavating there.”

Previously, there had been little cultivation of sub-tropical fruits in Azerbaidzhan. Now they were growing oranges, lemons, and tangerines and hoped soon to have surpluses to export. The Academy’s botanical section was developing medicinal plants. “Formerly we imported digitalis from America—now we shall be sending it to you!” said Mir-Kassimov.

The Agricultural and Soil Science departments were working on new fertilizers. An excellent fertilizer, soon to be produced on a large scale, is made from the organic elements of oil.

The social scientists of the Academy were preparing for a meeting of Orientalists from the eastern republics of the U.S.S.R. to be held the coming year. Problems to be taken up included: (1) The Azerbaidzhanian Renaissance in the epoch of Nizami; (2) The origin and growth of the Azerbaidzhanian people; (3) The mutual influence of Azerbaidzhanian and European literature.

The Academy had an ambitious publishing program. Mir-Kassimov presented me with a magnificently illustrated de-luxe edition of the poetical works of Nizami, in both Russian and Azerbaidzhanian. In preparation was the history of the epoch of Nizami, in many volumes, a complete translation of Nizami's works into modern Azerbaidzhanian by the poet Vurgun, and a history of the philosophical and scientific teachings of Azerbaidzhanians before the eighteenth century. The Academy also publishes a monthly journal and scientific reports. Mir-Kassimov was acquainted with the work of the American-Soviet Scientific Society and said that the scientists of Azerbaidzhan were eager to share their achievements with American scientists, and to receive materials and publications from America.

When I took leave, Kassimov invited me to visit him and his wife. He said it would be a privilege to entertain an American in their home—that he had done most of the talking and now would like to hear from me about America. This opportunity, unfortunately, I had to forego.

In working out my trip schedule, November 24 had seemed the last possible date on which I could leave Baku. But I figured without my hosts. Every time I asked whether tickets had been arranged for the night of the twenty-fourth, they told me not to worry, everything would be all right. When Shakh'yeldiev arrived on the morning of the twenty-fourth to take me on the day's rounds, I asked if he had our tickets for the train that night.

"But you cannot possibly leave tonight!" he exclaimed. "We are arranging train tickets for tomorrow night. . . ."

"But why? Please understand that I would like to stay on—but I have to be back in America by a certain date."

"Everyone felt that you must go to see *Ker Ogly* before you leave," he explained. "It was scheduled at the opera house for next week, but they have agreed to put it on tomorrow night so you can see it. We have settled everything and you can go right to the train from the theater."

THE WOMEN OF BAKU

I did not begrudge the delay, not only because of the opera itself, but because of the additional time it gave me to meet some of the leading women of Baku.

The first of the remarkable women I met was Kubra Faradzhieva, Secretary of the Presidium of the Azerbaidzhan Supreme Soviet. She is a beautiful woman with a round shapely figure, silky raven-black hair, black eyes, lovely arching eyebrows, one of which flew upward in a fascinating way when she talked. Her skin, literally, was like a white rose petal with a rosy flush that came and went, her lips softly red, her teeth sparkling white.

I asked her if she would tell me something about the role of women in her country.

"As you know, Soviet women have full equality and take as active a part as men in every field. In the Azerbaidzhanian Supreme Soviet, almost half of the three hundred deputies are women. Some are simple workers, and while serving as deputies they educate themselves, both through special courses and through their government duties. Some have become heads of factories and institutions. The Secretary of the Baku City Soviet is a woman, Mizoyeva. Women throughout the countryside are presidents of district Soviets and collective farms. Our Chimnez Askanova, a former peasant girl who wore a veil before the Revolution, is assistant chairman of the Council of Nationalities of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet."

I asked her about her own work.

"This body is the legislative and executive organ of our government, and as secretary I take an active part in everything the Supreme Soviet does. During the war everything produced in our republic was for the front. Now our main concern is the conversion to peacetime production. We were building many three-story apartment houses when the war came. Now we are going ahead again. We try to see to it that every family has enough rooms, a separate bath and kitchen. Many families are building their own homes on loans from the government. New sanatoria and rest homes are under construction. One now being built on the seashore, will accommodate many thousands of oil workers. Homes for orphaned children of Red Army men are being built. Being a doctor, I have particular interest in health measures. Another important problem is consumers' goods."

The modesty of these Azerbaidzhanian women rendered it difficult to draw out of them details about their personal life. But with some encouragement from my companions, who explained the way Americans are about such things, Faradzhieva

produced this brief biography, in which she found nothing unusual:

"I was born in 1907. My family lived in the District of Kuba. You know there is a song about the 'white apples of Kuba'—the section is very rich, in apples and fruit of all kinds—but our apples are especially beautiful. ('And not only the apples are beautiful in Kuba!' remarked Shakhyeldiev, drawing a blush.)

Faradzhieva went on: "My family were very poor, and when I was young, they came to Baku to find work. They hired out as domestic servants before the coming of the Soviet government. There were no other openings, especially for women. Few women, only the daughters of the rich, got any education at all. The road was open to us only after the coming of Soviet power—and my education began then.

"I became a village teacher. Then I studied at the Baku Medical Institute, and after I finished there in 1933 became a Deputy to the Village and District Soviet. I organized schools for the village girls. I became first Assistant Commissar of Health, and then Commissar of Health in 1938-39, continuing to serve as a physician, in a clinic. My specialty is children's illnesses. During the war I was elected secretary here. In 1941 and 1942, I was at the front organizing hospitals."

"For that she was several times decorated," added Shakhyeldiev.

"So you see, in general there is nothing exceptional about my history," she went on. "Others of our women have traveled the same road — from a workers' family, to teacher, to People's Commissar! I am married, we have two daughters — one of them speaks English by the way. She is a medical student. The other is a singer, studying at the Conservatory. I should add that I have been a member of the Communist Party since 1932."

My final question was whether there existed any masculine resistance to the role women are playing today. She glanced warmly toward the men who were with me.

"Our men do everything possible to assist in elevating the women to higher levels. We can only smile at people who think our men object. Work is given only to those who are capable. The criterion is one's ability—not one's sex!"

My next appointment was with Zakhra Kirimova, the Minister of Social Security, a motherly woman, shy and quiet, and obviously competent. Her office looked like the living room of a

comfortable home. Its atmosphere was warm and bright, there were fresh white covers on the divan and chairs, curtained windows, flowers all around.

Kirimova had likewise come from a poor workers' family. She had gone out to work as a household servant when she was seven or eight years old. At the time of the Revolution she was fifteen or sixteen, illiterate, and wore a veil. In 1920 she entered one of the schools for "liquidation of illiteracy." From there she passed on to a regular school in Baku, then a party school to train her for work among women, and eventually took a course in Moscow in 1939. She was elected a Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaidzhan, and then to her present position. Her husband had not yet returned from the front. They have two children, six and nine years old.

During and following the war a large part of Kirimova's work had been to organize courses for the wounded and crippled, who could not resume their previous work. They are retrained as bookkeepers, typists, weavers, musicians, shoemakers, tailors, beekeepers, etc. Altogether some 45,000 people in the republic had gone through these courses.

Zeinar Alizade was a woman of still a different type. She occupied the responsible post of Minister of Social Control. She was not beautiful, but the broad face from which her hair was drawn back smoothly and braided around her head was strong and intelligent. Orphaned daughter of a poor workers' family, she too began her education after the Revolution. From a children's home she went on to the polytechnical institute in Baku. She attended the Mendeleyev Chemical Technology Institute in Moscow, becoming an engineer in the silicate industry, later returning to Baku as chief engineer in its cement factory. From that she rose to head the building industry of Azerbaidzhan. Since 1940 she has held her present position, at the same time continuing her scientific work. Her Ministry checks up on the fulfillment of government decisions in industrial enterprises and participates in the initial planning and budget. The check begins with the lowest units of each industry, and follows through up to the Ministries in charge of the respective industries.

"Let us take the machine building industry," she explained. "The main problems are: first, control over the expenditure of money and of raw materials and other state properties; and, sec-

ond, the fulfillment of the decisions of the government. We check on the plan, on actual production, on expenditures. We determine whether production can be increased and quality improved. We see whether the necessary profit has been made. When mistakes and wastage are revealed by our investigations, we draw up instructions for their correction and check up on how they are carried out.

"And now," she said, "I have a question to ask you. I read a great many technical and engineering journals from the United States, but never once have I found in any of them an article written by a woman. Why is that?"

I did my best to explain something about the general position of women in America. She was puzzled that women should find difficulty in combining family life and careers, and that American women in general have very few children, and often none at all.

"How can that happen?" she exclaimed. "Children are the adornment of family life—I myself have three and hope to have more. I could not imagine life without them!"

The woman who headed up one of the biggest oil enterprises in Baku was away on vacation. Instead I talked with Taira Tairova, a woman engineer who holds the responsible post of "Secretary of the Communist Party for the Oil Industry," which makes her one of the top leaders of the republic. In every region the party has secretaries for the most important branches of industry and economy. They must be technically thoroughly equipped for the job, knowing the industry they have to deal with both from study and experience. Their work is economic rather than political. They not only act as spark plugs to keep production up to high levels, but give practical advice and assistance, working closely with the management, trade unions, and party organizations.

However, as Tairova explained to me, there is no contradiction here because for Marxists theory and practice are inseparable, and work to increase production is essential to the fulfillment of the Marxist program. Completing the transition from socialism to communism is the prime postwar task. Under socialism, the formula, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his *deeds*," prevails, because there is not yet enough material abundance to supply everyone's needs. The system of greater rewards for greater work is determined by this limitation and at

the same time acts as a spur to greater production. Communism is described by the formula, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his *needs*." To achieve communism a great expansion of productive forces is necessary, to provide enough material goods to supply everyone fully.

Taira Tairova was a young woman of thirty-two, slim, with curly brown hair, a longish face afire with energy and enthusiasm and a keen intellect. When I asked her how she had decided to become an oil engineer, she laughed:

"Many of my friends have asked me why I chose this work which takes me out into mud and oil. Some have tried to get me to take up the humanities instead, as more befitting a woman. But I knew from the very beginning what I wanted to do. I guess I was born with oil in my blood."

Her background differed somewhat from the others', in that her father had been a teacher, and she had not been deprived of an education in her earliest years since she was just of school age when the Revolution came. In 1935 she finished the Mining and Oil Faculty of the Baku Industrial Institute. She decided to go right into practical work in the oil industry and at twenty-four had become head of an oil field. In 1940 she became head of the Azerbaidzhanian Oil Research Institute, and two years later chief of the oil commissariat in the Azerbaidzhan government. Early this year she was appointed to her present post.

"Now," she told me, "I am continuing my practical work as an engineer along with my political work, which chiefly covers production. We are expanding our oil industry, finding new oil resources, and improving our drilling and refining."

I asked her whether any letdown was apparent among the workers now that the war was over.

"Some of our people, naturally, want to ease up. But we are doing everything possible to redirect the energy engendered during the war into peacetime production. During the war we tripled the output of aviation gasoline with a reduced staff. Everyone worked two or three times as well as before. The percentage of women workers was several times over what it was before the war. Fifty-year-old women, young girls, became proficient at highly skilled operations.

"The demand for oil is now greater than ever—and our workers and engineers feel that they have bigger responsibilities.

There's our driller, Rustam Rustamov, a Hero of Socialist Labor. Give him a task to fulfill in sixty days, he does it in thirty.

"In my own department I have several women engineers. We don't sit in our office, we see how things are on the spot."

I asked her whether she had any difficulty in combining her work and family life. "Certainly not," she said. "My husband is a geologist. When we get together we have a wonderful time; there's so much to talk about because we're interested in the same things. We have two children—four and five years old. They are well taken care of in the kindergarten."

At a little farewell supper most of the people of whom I have written came to say good-bye. It was a warm and moving occasion, full of expressions of friendship for America. A group of them went along to the opera with me.

The opera, *Ker Ogly*, woven around the story of a beloved folk hero of the Azerbaidzhanian people, was magnificent. In this opera Gadzhibekov has taken the folk music of his people and lifted it to a high professional level. Folk instruments are blended with orchestral instruments. The music, the drama, the staging and costuming, in the glowing colors of the east, are exquisite. The gifted Niazi, dressed this time in impeccable evening clothes, conducted the opera superbly, visiting with us between the acts. I hope *Ker Ogly* may one day be produced in America, preferably by the Azerbaidzhanians themselves, as cultural ambassadors from their people to ours.

CHAPTER VII

RECONSTRUCTION IN ROSTOV

It was a rather long, slow ride from Baku to Rostov since we had missed the express for the sake of *Ker Ogly*.

Along the way I caught a glimpse of Mineralny Vodi which had been our junction point in the days of Russian Reconstruction Farms at Maslov Kut. How often, coming in from Moscow or Rostov, we had waited here at the *Nochleg* (night lodging), for the train that took us on, at four o'clock in the morning, to Maslov Kut. That train had been called the "Maxim Gorky." I never quite knew why; perhaps because of the way it wandered across the countryside, perhaps from the "lower depths" atmosphere of the rough cars in which we rode, with peasants tumbling in and out all through the night; perhaps from the endless conversations that went on in its unlighted depths.

How many meals I had enjoyed at the station, borscht and shashlik, washed down with good Caucasian wine—the wine of the country, for there had once been rich vineyards nearby. The little station had been replaced by a fine modern building, which the Germans had left a ruin. On another track a hospital train was standing. I could see bandaged Red Army men through the windows; crippled ones stood on the platform, stretching whatever they had left of arms and legs. The war was suddenly very close. It was so familiar here and hard to imagine that the lovely steppes I knew so well had all been trampled and strewn with dead.

Every station along the way presented the same picture of devastation. We could not even get water; the water towers along the way had been smashed.

In our car were several Red Army officers discharged

from hospitals near Baku. One of them was a Cossack captain, Dmitri Ossipovich, a good-looking chap, with a broad pleasant face, wide-set, vivid blue eyes shining out of a ruddy skin, a gray astrakhan hat set at a rakish angle on his head. He had met Americans in Czechoslovakia. "They are frank and democratic, like our people," he said. He had been in the front line during the whole war, had sixteen horses shot under him, and received three wounds himself. Once, pointing through the window, he said:

"Just a few kilometers from here, my cavalry detachment was surrounded. It was early summer and we were in an orchard. For sixteen days we had no water—and nothing but a few green apples and pears to eat. I hardly ever slept in a room during the whole war. There were times when my one desire on earth was a few hours, just a few hours, sleep in a warm room." Dmitri was going home to Rostov, relieved that the fighting was over, yet sad because he had no family to welcome him.

"We Cossacks are great family people, you know," Dmitri said. "I had a wonderful wife, she was a doctor, but she died before the war. My little daughter was killed by a German bomb. I loved my wife very much and it was lonely after she died. When the war came I was on the deferred list, as a railroad worker. But I volunteered. So many of my comrades died beside me—all of those I loved best—but somehow, here I am still alive. I seem to have a charmed life!"

At dawn the third morning we arrived at Rostov. Even at that hour, there was somebody to meet us, Comrade Popova, secretary of the Rostov City Soviet.

I had visited Rostov frequently in the late twenties. As we drove through the main street, with the snow falling softly, I could see what an immense amount of building had been done in the years between—most of it now blackened shells. Rostov was the railroad and administrative center of the North Caucasus which embraced the rich Kuban black earth section, and important industrial areas. Part of the Donets Coal Basin is in this region, new iron and steel industries had gone up.

All of Rostov's hotels had been destroyed, and Popova apologized for quartering us in rooms in one of the few big apartment houses that remained standing.

Popova told us some of the horrors the city had been through. In August, 1941, the first German bomber had appeared.

Then on October 8, a Saturday afternoon, a students' picnic on the banks of the Don just outside the city had been bombed and many killed. From then on bombing was incessant. Rostov had known the special horror of being recaptured after its first liberation. Popova had been twice evacuated. Her second child had been born during the war. Her husband had been killed at Kharkov.

CHILDREN OF ROSTOV

When I told Popova I would like to get an over-all picture of reconstruction in Rostov, she said: "We can put up our buildings again. But we cannot bring back our people who were killed; we can only make life better for those who are left. I think you should begin by seeing the way we are rebuilding the lives of our people, first of all our children." So we went first to the homes for "children who lost their parents in the war." (The word "orphanage" was never used.)

We drove through the central section of the town past the shell of the once magnificent Gorky Theater, built in 1936, one of the largest and most handsome in the Soviet Union. Erected at a cost of 20,000,000 rubles its rebuilding would cost 23,000,000.

It was a dark, snowy day, but inside the first children's home we visited, we were greeted by a flood of warmth and color. In the dance hall, five- and six-year olds were whirling each other around like little adults. The children were dressed in attractive dresses and suits, all different. The director, Anna Pendurina, a sweet-faced and motherly woman, said: "Each child has a different personality. We study each one, and try to dress them the way their own mother would."

The children are kept here until they are seven, and then sent on to a home for school-age children. In some cases one parent was still alive, but war conditions had made a normal family life impossible. Adoption of orphans had been widespread during the war, because it was felt that wherever possible a child should be brought up in a family. But immediate adoption frequently gave rise to complications. There were cases when, after the child had become completely adjusted to the new family, a parent thought dead or some near relative had turned up. There were even cases where a returning father, finding his child with

new ties, had to make the tragic decision to give up the child. It was now felt that war orphans should be cared for in well-organized homes and adoption permitted only when it was absolutely certain there were no relatives seeking the child.

The foremost concern was to create a homelike environment. It was clear from the warm and loving atmosphere, how well this had been achieved. The children called the director "Mama."

"The German burgomeister and his staff lived here in this building," Pendurina told me, "It was partly in ruins; there were no windows, it was dirty and damp, there was no heat, the plumbing out-of-order. We did most of the repairing ourselves.

"In the beginning our children were undernourished; many had been wounded and crippled; many had been still more deeply wounded in their souls, having seen their parents murdered, their mothers and sisters raped before their eyes. Now our children hardly remember the horrors they have been through.

"Our doctor happens to be an artist as well. She painted the pictures you see on the walls. She even makes toys for the children. Sophia Emanuelovna, do show them those puppets you made!" Blushing with embarrassment and pleasure, Dr. Chibanova ran out of the room, returning quickly with her arms full of characters from Russian folk tales and Krylov's fables which she had contrived out of odds and ends.

To my question as to whether the children still had psychological problems, Pendurina replied: "Hardly any now. We ourselves never dreamed we could overcome them so quickly. Our psychiatrist keeps watch on every child's development. Each child gets personal attention. Every birthday is celebrated with parties and presents. We believe in lots of story telling, dramatic play, music, pictures and slides."

The second home we visited was more crowded, caring for eighty children instead of fifty. It was not as attractive as the first, with its artist-doctor, but it had the same luminous atmosphere of joy and affection.

This home was run under the special patronage of the Rostov Military Garrison, which helped supply equipment. Their soldier patrons had sent the children to Gagli on the Black Sea to spend the summer, and the rooms were full of pets and treasures from their sojourn. On November 7, the garrison commander had

reviewed the school's parade. "Do you know," the director told me, "he just stood there and wept, that big strong man with all his medals. Then the officers all crowded in while the children put on a performance."

As we visited the various groups, I noticed how attentively Popova observed every detail, asking in one room, "Why is it so cold here? It should be warmer for the children." And in another, "Why haven't you more toys?"

I have never seen anything like the warmth and spontaneity of these children. The teacher asked them to sing for me, which they did, and lustily. A little girl with black bangs and an enormous red hair-ribbon tied in a bow bigger than her face, recited a poem about Zoya Kosmodemianskaya, the guerrilla martyr-heroine. After that a chubby little boy recited a poem to a tank driver father; but, the verses went on, he himself would grow up in a world at peace and drive a tractor instead.

When this formal part was finished, the children literally swarmed over us. They hugged and kissed me. They knew a surprising amount about America. "Roosevelt was your President, wasn't he? We saw his pictures in the papers!" "The Americans sent us presents—they're good people!" "Auntie, why do you talk in such a funny way?" "How do you say 'children' in American?"

They pulled me this way and that to look at their pets, their drawings; they filled my arms with their toys. From the affection they lavished on me it was quite clear how much affection they received. They were completely natural about it because this to them was the natural way for human beings to act toward one another.

Next we were taken to the Children's Home for orphans of school age—from seven to seventeen. The director, Nina Markushova, was big-bosomed, broad-hipped, with a wide, friendly face. She bubbled with enthusiasm, roared with laughter at the slightest provocation, and so overflowed with love of her work, of her children, of her city, of her country, and of life in general that one felt an actual, tangible warmth exuding from her.

This building had been a school before the war, and Markushova had been its principal.

"We could not believe that the Germans would ever take Rostov," she told us. "We kept on holding school regularly even after the bombing began. Before we knew it, the Germans were

practically on top of us, and the order came to leave immediately.

"The city authorities put some three and four year olds in our charge, too. We had to start off on foot. The littlest ones we carried to a place ten miles beyond the town. Then we came back for the fifty other children, and finally got them all together.

"They asked me where I wanted to go. I answered, 'It doesn't matter *where*—so long as we are beyond the sound and range of bombs—the main thing is to get the children far enough away so that the war cannot reach them. So they sent us to Altai, in Siberia, a beautiful place.

"No one during the war had enough even for themselves. But the people of Altai shared everything with us. The collective farmers helped. After we came back parents still in Rostov came for their children." But many no longer had parents. And for these and other Rostov children who had lost theirs, the school became a home, with Markushova in charge. It now has 120 boys and girls.

Unlike the children's homes organized after the 1917 Revolution, classes are not held in the home itself; the children attend the regular schools. The authorities had learned that children who had lost their parents should not feel set apart from the rest of the community, but should share the day-to-day life of other children.

The children remain here until they complete the regular ten-year school course, after which most of them will go on to colleges or technical schools.

When the girls and boys return home after school, they have supervised study hours, with the staff on hand to help with homework. The main concern, however, is to train them in independent study habits. After-school activities include circles for literature, chorus, ballet, instrumental music, handicrafts. Artists from the local theater come to entertain and to coach them.

"Every one of my boys and girls takes part in some circle," Markushova told me. "There's not one who cannot sing, and many play instruments. We took first place in the regional amateur art contest last year! Tomorrow evening—you must come back and see what they can do!" Therewith began an unequal struggle between us, the conclusion of which was quite foregone. I wanted to see as many different things as possible in the little time I had. But Markushova was determined to show America, through me, how her children could sing and dance, and I had to yield.

The children have a lot to say concerning how their home

is run. They elect a Children's Council of nine, which elects a chairman. The council considers their day-to-day problems. They have an economic commission, which helps with household and accounting problems, a sanitary commission which looks after general cleanliness and order, and a cultural commission.

Markushova kept emphasizing her conviction that the main thing was to approximate home conditions as closely as possible.

"We provide uniforms for school work," she explained. "But all my children have their own clothes for after school. I have dressmakers here. I won't have readymade clothes for my children—their clothes must fit both their figures and their personalities!"

"Such a Mamasha!" remarked Popova. "Do you know, she takes care of her children so well, I believe she has laid in supplies for them for three years in advance!"

Markushova laughed her infectious laugh.

"Well, our patrons help us generously, I see to that!" she said. "And as for food, we have a farm of our own and I myself come from a collective farm family, and I get supplies from my own kolkhoz too!"

"One day last September," Popova went on, "there was a scandal in town—wagon load after wagon load of watermelons, beans, corn, potatoes, drew up before this home and started unloading—yes, our Markushova is certainly a good provider!"

More laughter from Markushova. "Yes, the whole street watched us unload that day. 'Aren't you ashamed to have so much?' they said to me. How could I be ashamed? I made up my mind that my children had suffered enough and never again should they be cold and hungry."

"And in spite of all she's received—she's always coming to the Soviet and asking for more!" went on Popova.

"That's right," chuckled Markushova. "For example, I only have two pianos—and I simply must have another. I've already spent 200,000 rubles over my budget this year, and I want more. And by the way, Comrade Popova, where are those extra frames? Here it is winter already, and we still haven't got all our double windows in."

"The factory will have them ready in a few days," Popova answered meekly. "But about your budget, you really must be care-

ful, the city Soviet doesn't approve of going over your allotment. . . ."

"I've just got to have more—that's all," Markushova rejoined. "You know yourself, when it's for the children the budget commission will wink at such things."

While most of Rostov's children's institutions were content with one or two "patrons" Markushova had a long list, including the Musical Comedy Theater, "Molot" (the regional newspaper), the Regional Military Organization, the Rostov Dairy Combinat, the Regional Trade Organization, Glavkhleb (the city bakery), the Regional Woodwork Trust, etc. Murkushova needed them all for supplies for her beloved children—no one could refuse her.

The following evening when we arrived for the entertainment, the whole place simply sparkled. Dressed in their best, the children stood massed in two mathematically perfect squares, the tallest in back, leveling down to the smallest tots in front. They stood straight and proud, shining faces turned toward me in welcome. The teacher at the piano struck a chord, the song leader raised her baton, and they burst into the *Ode to Stalin*, shaking the very rafters with their clear, sweet, vigorous young voices. Other songs followed. I have never heard such exultant singing as poured from the throats of these young orphans whose fathers and mothers had given their lives that they might live in freedom. All this was just for me, because I was an American, a messenger, as Markushova announced, from "a great and friendly people."

After the singing, a group of six, the youngest, did a gay Russian folk dance, the little girls in long, high-waisted dresses, with kerchiefs on their heads, the little boys in baggy adult trousers tucked into boots. The smallest one, a pretty little dark girl, dipped and swayed with delicate, enchanting grace. A ballet pair performed, the girl a perfect little ballerina in regulation costume; the boy, also a beautiful dancer, in white satin tights. "They should be sent to a ballet school," Popova whispered to Markushova. "Yes, we have proposed it to them," Markushova answered, "but neither of them wants to go. The girl wants to study medicine and the boy engineering."

A humorous Norwegian dance was performed by an older group, their costumes correct in every detail; then Russian folk dances, in which everybody joined. Markushova looked on with tenderness and pride, every so often turning toward me to see how

I was taking it, and to tell me about the different performers.

Then, at a signal, the children grouped themselves in a semi-circle. A fair-haired little girl stepped forward and stood in front of me. This is what she said:

"Please take back our flaming greetings to the children of America. Tell them we want to be friends with them always. Thanks from our hearts to the people of America for all they did in helping our Red Army to fight the fascists, for all the presents they sent us after the Germans took everything away from us. We did not expect such a wonderful thing to happen as that an American guest would visit our school, and you made us very happy by coming here. Long live our dear leader Stalin, long live your great country, long live the warm friendship of our people!"

With a large lump in my throat I answered as best I could. After that they all started dancing once again, whirling into the typical Russian folk dance where each in turn executes more complicated steps. One little girl came dancing up to me with an invitation to be her partner, another to Ksana, another to Popova, another to Markushova. They all seemed to think that there was something very special about having an American dancing there among them, and the room was full of laughter and warmth. Then Markushova reminded the children that tomorrow was a school day. They swarmed around me, hugging and kissing me good-bye, begging me to come again, and finally piled out of the room waving and calling back to me.

In the pre-war days there had been 83 schools in Rostov, with 72,000 students. All had been damaged and about half wholly or partially destroyed. Fifty-six schools had been sufficiently repaired to function again, and 46,000 children—all those of school age now living in Rostov—were using the schools in shifts.

Before the war, Rostov had served as the educational center for the whole North Caucasus, with a State University, and institutes of Pedagogy, Finance and Economics, Agricultural Machine Building, Construction, Transport Engineering, and Medicine. It also had a number of *technicums*—for pedagogy, construction, and communications; two schools of music and two marine schools, one for river and one for marine navigation, and trade schools and factory evening schools. These had suffered damages in the same proportion as the lower schools. Every one of these higher educational institutions was now working again, either in restored build-

ings or in temporary quarters, operating in several shifts.

We were taken for a visit to School No. 45, a seven-year school attended by 695 girls. Its former fine building ruined, it was now in temporary quarters, so cramped that the school ran on three shifts. The director, Anastasia Tumassova, informed us that the Germans had stripped them of every book, map, desk and blackboard. At the beginning of the school year they had not had a single test tube or retort for experiments, but with the help of the local factories, and with makeshifts the children had brought from home, they managed somehow. With electric light bulbs converted into small retorts, assorted bottles and glasses such as we casually throw into our waste baskets every day, the children had performed all the required experiments.

In visiting Rostov's schools, I made a point of inquiring about the separation of boys and girls. What I was told tallied with what I heard everywhere on the subject, which is described more fully in the chapter on education.

"For girls of twelve and thirteen, who are just beginning to mature, this is their most difficult and decisive period," Tumassova told me, "and we feel the approach to them must be especially sensitive and understanding. In the seventh grade, when they are fourteen and fifteen, the boys of the same age are still just kids. By the time they reach the tenth class, the girls are already young women, while the boys are still just little 'cockerels.' When they were taught together, both suffered. In the older classes, the girls simply ordered the boys around. Socially, they felt the boys were too young for them. They were already interested in college students. This had a bad effect on the boys themselves, wounding their self-esteem.

"We have to develop in our boys qualities of strength, courage, and manliness, while one of the most important aspects of training the girls is that they are the future mothers. It is just as important to train highly qualified mothers as highly skilled engineers. "In general, we find that when boys and girls study together, the girls grow up to be perhaps rougher than their natures demand, and the boys gentler. . . . Each takes on certain qualities of the other.

"But do not think," she added hastily, "that this means we carry on a sentimental type of training. No, we reject a sentimental attitude toward women. We want our girls to have good manners,

to be attractive, intelligent, modest; we want them to dress well, to understand what is beautiful, but also to be ready for any kind of work."

So many of the girls had gone into technical and engineering work in the earlier period that a certain unbalance had been created. Girls were more apt to go into such professions under a system of co-education, in order to show that they are up to the boys in everything. Without that competitive element, a larger proportion of the girls show an interest in artistic and humanitarian pursuits; thus there is a better balance in the choice of professions.

A fourth-grade class in literature I looked in on was studying Krylov, beloved Russian fable writer. A pretty dark-haired little eleven-year old, Svetlana Laktionova, was giving a report. Completely self-possessed, she stood before a table, on which were laid out her notes and references, and presented a thorough discussion of Krylov's life and writing and the period in which he worked.

In the mathematics classroom we ran into a teacher who had recently celebrated her 79th birthday. She had been living on a retirement pension but has resumed teaching during the war, and expects to keep on till the day she dies. She wore the Order of Lenin. A frail, bent little woman, she spoke with a booming voice. "We have much to learn from your country. We would like to have more contacts with American teachers."

The Rostov Boys School No. 39 was crowded into a wrecked building only partially restored. I visited the sixth class, in the midst of an English lesson. Their teacher, a golden-haired, youthful-looking girl, had just completed her studies at the Moscow Foreign Language Institute when the war came. She had enlisted in the Red Army and had been in the front lines. But now she was trembling with embarrassment at the presence of a guest from abroad.

The boys wrote English well, forming the letters with painful care, and could speak in simple sentences. "Comrade Davidov," the star pupil, tried to help the others when they stumbled, forming the words with his mouth but, when he himself was called on, was too fussed to do well. Chagrined not to give a good account of himself before the American visitor, his small white face turned crimson. At the end, he spoke for the class, asking me to take their greetings back to the children of America, and to arrange for them to correspond with children in an American school, "so we

can get to know our Allies better," was the way he expressed it.

The ravages of the war were apparent in this classroom. Some of the children had been crippled. They were of different ages, too, many having been deprived of schooling under German occupation.

Outside in the recreation hall, classes were changing and there was a terrific uproar. In the girls' school the ten minutes recess between classes was usually spent in dancing or promenading. Here, among the boys, the favored diversions were singing, games or "just making noise." As soon as the boys found an American in their midst they made a rush at me. A hundred or so pressed around me from all sides asking questions about America, fighting to get closer. Here, as in all the schools I visited, I noted the remarkable Soviet freedom-within-discipline. These children are obedient, courteous, respectful, and at the same time, the most spontaneous, natural, unselfconscious children I have ever seen.

THE PEOPLE'S HEALTH

"Human beings come first." I heard this comment over and over again in Rostov. Along with care of children, the healing of the ill and wounded and the restoration of the public health system was of prime concern to the Rostov authorities.

The leadership in this work fell to Dr. Ariuton Barashian, director of Rostov's Department of Health. He was a small, wiry Armenian, with a deeply rutted face and dark, gentle eyes. His frail body was a coiled spring of resilient energy, fed by his ardent spirit, which enabled him to work superhumanly at the unending problem of giving life and health to the people of Rostov.

Dr. Barashian had been appointed head of a military hospital at the beginning of the war. Wounded, he was evacuated to Kazakhstan, where as soon as he recovered he was again put in charge of a hospital. In 1942, after the first liberation of Rostov, he returned to work there. When the Germans took Rostov a second time, he was again evacuated, along with his whole hospital, its patients and staff, this time to Tashkent, in Central Asia.

"I had a difficult time keeping my nurses in Tashkent," he told me. "They all wanted to go to the front. I tried to make them understand that it was also serving the front to take care of the wounded behind the lines. Nevertheless there were many

I could not hold back. Now they are with me again, wearing their decorations. . . . Some did not return."

In August 1943, following the final liberation of the city, Dr. Barashian was called upon to re-establish public health work in Rostov.

"First," he said, "we had to fight typhus with which the Germans had deliberately infected the city. Hospitals, clinics, public baths had all been destroyed. We had to wipe out the sources of infection. Often we had to carry patients to quarantine stations in our own arms because we had no ambulances.

"Then we started a prophylactic campaign, to instruct the people how to avoid illness. After the typhus came an epidemic of influenza. Our doctors went around to all the factories and apartment houses informing people how the disease is contracted and how to avoid it. We used the press, leaflets, radio, wall newspapers to spread information.

"Before the war venereal disease had become so uncommon in our country, our specialists in this field complained they had nothing to work with! The Germans provided them with work. But we have practically wiped these diseases out again.

"Next came the task of restoring the health institutions. Of our ten hospitals, eight were almost completely destroyed. They had been bombed, used as barracks, the floors, doors, windows carried off, every bit of equipment looted or smashed. We had literally nothing to start with. The sick had to bring their own bedding. We were undermanned; many had been killed, many were still at the front. Each of us had to take the place of about ten people. Before the war we had about a thousand workers in our city health system. Now we have about 700.

"Our children's institutions suffered worst. Most of the nurseries and maternity centers were destroyed. About 60 per cent have been restored. We managed to maintain our work with mothers. We have special consultation clinics for all pregnant women, and nurse service. Before the war we had about fifty creches in Rostov, accommodating some 3,000 infants. At present we have about thirty, caring for 1,300 infants, a reflection of our reduced population and lowered birth rate. With the demobilized returning, the birth rate is rising again."

Rostov's twenty-five polyclinics and dispensaries were all operating again. Every family had both a general practitioner to go

to, or a specialist available if necessary, free of charge. There were more medical aid stations at factories now than before the war. The Medical Institute was open again, with hundreds of young students, its professors doing double duty as teachers and hospital consultants. But nowhere was there yet adequate equipment. In the hospitals, they only had, as Dr. Barashian put it, "one and a half changes of bedding and clothing for our patients, when we should have five."

Dr. Barashian arranged to have me visit the central Rostov hospital. Of its eleven damaged buildings, eight had already been rebuilt. Dr. Henrietta Ribak, assistant director, took me around. Our first visit was to a small private room on the ground floor where a wan child lay in bed, a radiant-faced woman sitting by his side. "We have America to thank for this, the miracle of the penicillin you sent us," Dr. Ribak said. Two days before the boy had been dying of spinal meningitis, but penicillin had saved him.

Of the hospital's prewar 1,500 beds, only 870 had been replaced, but before the end of the year they hoped to be back to normal capacity. There was a lack of many essentials, but the place was shining and clean, and I was impressed with the staff.

"We helped build this hospital," said Dr. Ribak, "we love it like our own child. When we came back to it we wept at what we saw. We did much of the restoration work with our own hands."

All the beds were occupied everywhere except in the children's section, eloquent tribute to the effectiveness of Dr. Barashian's health program. The maternity ward was thriving.

I asked Dr. Ribak if they offered women contraceptive advice after their babies were born, and advised them not to have babies too close together.

"Of course we give them advice on contraceptives," she told me. "But whether or not we advise them how soon they should have another baby depends on the state of their health. Some of our women are eager for large families. And if it will not harm them, we certainly do not stop it—remember how many millions of our people have died, how few babies have been born in these war years!"

The doctors showered me with questions regarding American medicine which I was distressed not to be able to answer. All expressed the desire to receive more medical publications from America and to be in closer touch with American physicians.

As I walked through the grounds I noticed an ancient gardener tending a bed of white chrysanthemums, blooming bravely through the first snows.

"Ah, but you should have seen our gardens before," said Dr. Ribak. "Dr. Barashian was always so proud of them; he felt they were almost as important to our patients as medical care."

Back in my room that evening, I found an immense basket of the white chrysanthemums, with a card, "From Dr. Barashian, Dr. Ribak and the staff of our hospital, a small token of our gratitude for all that America has done for us."

ROSTOV REBUILDS

At a luncheon with some Rostov writers, I toasted "The great writers of the Don," thinking especially of Sholokhov, a native son.

One of my hosts answered quickly, "No, dear friend, we must drink rather to the writers of the great Don!" We compromised on "the great writers of the great Don!"

The two German occupations which brought so much death and horror had neither broken nor changed the spirit of the Don people, their warmth and friendliness which in a country known for its hospitable customs stands out with a unique quality of its own—an insistent and sincere warmth from the heart which gives a special meaning to all their human relations.

Everything in Rostov has its own special flair and flavor. The people of Rostov will tell you, "You should have seen the style of the women in Rostov before the war—no women in Russia could compare with them!" And somehow despite the old and shabby clothes they were still wearing, that style could be seen, in the swing of their bodies and the lift of their chins and the light that shone through the sadness in their eyes. Nor had anything changed in the special quality of their cooking which I remembered well from the old days, and which Ksana, herself a Cossack girl from a nearby town, kept looking forward to eagerly.

One day, after a busy round of visits, I found Ilya Serbin, Chief Architect of Rostov, and Mikhail Ishumin, his assistant, waiting in my room.

They had arrived with portfolios of photographs, rolls of blueprints and charts. They took me back to the very beginning

of the city, showing me old prints of the ancient, sprawling town. Ataman Efremov, who ruled the Don region from 1738-1753, was its founder; Peter the Great, its first planner and builder. A mere village in tsarist times, it was only during the five-year plans that the city began to take on an urban aspect.

They spread out before me photos of Rostov before the Germans came—the newly asphalted streets, the modern apartment houses, the parks, the great “Selmash,” the agricultural machinery works on the outskirts. “See our city, how it grew and grew,” they said, their eyes caressing the fine buildings. “Then the fascists came and spoiled all our work—this is what they did, and this and this. . . .” They showed me a long vista of the city’s main thoroughfare, Engels Street, lined with trees and modern buildings, and then the shambles the Germans had left of it. Driven out the second time the Germans knew they would not come back. They detailed sapper squads to demolish the city, trying to destroy the main buildings so thoroughly they could not be rebuilt. Altogether 2,562 large buildings and 238 big industrial enterprises were demolished. Of Rostov’s 250,000 people, about 200,000 were left without livable homes. A full third of the city was demolished.

“So we began to build again.” Now they laid before me pictures of the reconstruction which began the day after liberation. The inhabitants pitched in with volunteer labor after their own work. The U.S.S.R. Academy of Architecture in Moscow designated Academician Semenov to work with the local architects on a new plan for Rostov.

“Most of our big factories,” they informed me, “will be relocated outside of town. The prevailing wind blows from the east and northeast, so industry will be concentrated in the west, to keep smoke and grime out of the city. Along the river bank there will be boulevards and parks and sport grounds.

“Access to the river,” they continued, “was formerly difficult—now there will be approaches from each of the main squares, which will be treated as architectural ensembles. Gorky Square, the largest, will hold parades and demonstrations. ‘Dom Sovietov’ Square will not only be the administrative center, but also the ‘composition center,’ setting the tone for the architecture of the rest of the city.

“Kirov Square will be enlarged, and given over to science and art. Here will be our new university building, public library,

and picture gallery. Our park system will be extended. Before the war the proportion was 70 per cent thickly populated area to 30 per cent open space. Now we will reverse that, with only 35 per cent built up, the rest open."

More than 350,000 square meters in new apartment houses had already gone up, and hundreds of new individual homes.

The five city theaters that had been destroyed were being rebuilt. Four were already operating in other buildings (I saw several excellent performances). Five of the eight ruined cinema houses had been restored. Work was under way on the libraries, all twenty-three of which were in use again. Many smaller factories had been restored, and work was proceeding on the large plants.

The drive out to "Selmarsh," the huge agricultural machinery works, took us through an area of fiendish devastation. Most pathetic was the wreckage of the Children's Railroad which lay outside the leveled workers' settlement. These Children's Railroads were one of the unique features of the "learn by doing" program of the U.S.S.R. There had been fifteen such miniature railroads, and Rostov's had been one of the best. Real locomotives and passenger cars, manned by children, ran over its miles of track. At its child-size station, real tickets were sold by the young "railroad workers" to the passengers they proudly carried. They had complete dispatcher, signal and switching systems, all operated by children. Now the tracks were tangled and twisted, the miniature station a shell.

In the ruined workers' settlement some 50,000 workers and their families had lived. Of these about 30,000 had occupied individual houses, the rest new apartment houses. It was now about one-third rebuilt; they hoped to have another third completed in 1946. Much of the new housing was private homes.

The fine park and the big sport stadium were a shambles. All the schools, clubs, model kindergartens, factory restaurants, hospitals, dispensaries, and other institutions had been destroyed. We came to a stop before the biggest ruin we had yet seen—immense and terrible piles of rubble, twisted iron, smashed concrete, rusted parts of machinery, shattered walls of buildings far as the eye could see. This had been the biggest agricultural machinery plant in all Europe.

A group of men in front of a rough shack serving as temporary plant office came forward to welcome us. The spokesman

introduced himself as Alexander Krasnochekov, construction engineer. As we picked our way across rough boards leading through the piles of rubble, Krasnochekov said: "This was a garden factory. We had fine asphalt walks lined with flower beds."

I asked about the pre-war production of "Selmash."

"You Americans once sent one of your combines to our regional agricultural department here at Rostov," answered Krasnochekov. "Our engineers made over 300 technical improvements in it. You see, our demands on machinery are greater than America's which work on smaller fields."

"Before the war, we also manufactured plows, drills, mowing machines of our own construction with five separate cutters, each seven feet long, cutting thirty-five feet altogether. Our daily production totaled 1,500,000 gold rubles. Our factory produced twenty-five per cent of all the agricultural machinery in the U.S.S.R. and was the foundation of our country's mechanized agriculture. That's why the Germans tore it apart."

Most of the machinery had been shipped away to the East. Enough to start operations with was brought back, and about half of the evacuated workers had returned.

We stopped to examine a weirdly crumpled building that looked as though it had been simultaneously hit by an earthquake from below and bombs from above.

"This was once our big modern repair shop," Krasnochekov explained. "When our returning workers saw its condition, they said, 'This means the Germans know they will never return.'"

The Germans had planned that this shop should never be rebuilt. The explosives had been placed in such a way that the roof had fallen in, the pillars fallen inward, the walls buckled inward.

"We either had to blow up the whole building completely," Krasnochekov went on, "or find some way of standing it up again—a much more complicated problem. But we decided it was more economical to salvage as much material as we could."

One of the plant woodworking departments, the only building to escape major damage, was fully restored. It was producing door frames, children's beds for the factory kindergartens and day nurseries, and other goods for immediate needs. They were planning a big department for consumers' goods to be made out of their own scrap. (In the spring of 1948 I read that the plant had completed its restoration.)

The next day when I picked up the Rostov newspaper, *Molot*, I was interested to read a leading editorial sharply taking to task the manager of "Selmash" because he had not yet put into operation the consumers' goods department of his factory. When he was asked why the delay he had answered, "I have more important things to think about—I have to get machinery produced first." The editorial went on to say that the time had passed when anyone had the right to say that machinery was more important than consumers' goods.

AGRICULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION

In 1929, after the Russian Reconstruction Farms group had finished its work at Maslov Kut, Harold Ware had helped to establish a model experimental farm at Verblud, about a hundred miles from Rostov. With him in this project was associated Professor M. L. Wilson, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and several other American specialists. Using the Maslov Kut experience, and again taking over a full complement of modern types of American agricultural machinery, this project, too, developed into a monument to American-Soviet co-operation. Known as "Zernograd" (city of grain) and "Model-Experimental State Farm No. I," it had become a showplace of the new Soviet agriculture. The hope of visiting it had been one of my special motives in visiting Rostov.

The railroad spur leading to Zernograd had, however, been destroyed in the war and at the time of my visit the roads were in such terrible condition that it was feared we would not be able to make it and so I had to give up the trip. Instead I had a talk with Horshilov, chief "agronom" of the Rostov region.

Horshilov assured me that the American group was still gratefully remembered. Zernograd had become a thriving little town, with a population of about 10,000. It had 75,000 acres of cultivated land, of which 12,000 were set aside for scientific purposes. Its pre-war harvests of high quality grain had yielded 18 to 20 centners per acre. Zernograd had included an agricultural college, an agricultural engineering institute, an experimental and seed-selection station, a machine testing station. They had had their own radio broadcasting system, three electric power stations, sturdy apartment houses, a modern hospital, club, library.

"When the Germans took over," Horshilov said, "they

made a mess of everything. They were only able to get about ten per cent of the normal production. We couldn't evacuate all the population in time, and the Germans killed many of our people. We found twenty-three of the scientific staff in one grave. Many of the people who lived there were driven into Germany as slaves. Those who stayed carried on sabotage and were able to hide and bury a lot of valuable machinery and equipment, but most of it was destroyed along with the best buildings."

Now Zernograd was rising again. Scientific research work had been resumed, and the pre-war quota of over 300 students was there again, although working under difficult conditions, with little equipment. They had already received tractors from the Stalingrad factory. Almost the whole pre-war area was again under crops.

Horshilov told me that in spite of the vast amount of ruin the Germans had left behind after over two years' occupation, all the state farms of the Rostov region were in process of restoration, as well as the 1,800 collective farms of the region. About three-quarters of the former cultivated land was being worked.

"As soon as the Germans had been driven out, the whole area was de-mined. But as our tractors worked in the fields, a second layer of mines was uncovered. There have been many tragic cases of our young men being killed after they had come home."

Restoring the livestock herds was a big problem. Sheep herds were almost completely restored, and they hoped in another year that long-horned cattle and milk cows would be back at normal. Horshilov spoke with special pride of the Don horses:

"Our Don horses, bred by our collective and state farms, are among the finest of the world. They are the color of gold, with a white star on their forehead, and white 'stockings.' Many of them traveled the long road from Stalingrad to Berlin. We did everything we could to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy. Now we are breeding a new generation."

Horshilov spoke wistfully of the prosperity of their villages before the war. "Life was good in our region. Our Cossack women are very beautiful. You should have seen them in happier days. On Sundays and holidays they wore white silk dresses. Our women knew how to work well—and they like to dress well too."

Because of the condition of the roads, we could only visit a few of the nearby villages, and we had to settle on a jeep for transportation. In a light snowstorm we rode through villages which

had been scenes of heavy fighting. The snow hid much of the damage, and most of the little clay village houses had been rebuilt, so it was hard to conceive how recently war had passed that way. The Cossacks love color, and pink, blue and green paint had been added to the whitewash that covered the houses, their shutters painted in contrasting colors, giving them a fairy tale aspect.

Crowded into the jeep with us was Ivan Petrov, the district agronom, who had fought here as a partisan all through the German occupation. "Where did you hide?" I asked, wondering what could have sheltered them in this flat sparsely wooded country.

"In the swamps," he grinned. "For over six months I lived in water and mud up to here," indicating his chest.

With us too went Vassily Pimkin, a rough-hewn and hearty character, bristling with energy and good humor.

Pimkin was director of what had been the prize M.T.S. (machine and tractor station) of the region before the war. These government stations supply mechanized help to collective farms. They do all the heavy mechanical field work, receiving approximately 10 per cent of the crops in payment. The system saves the collective farms the expense and upkeep of heavier types of machinery as well as the skilled labor. Before the war Pimkin's M.T.S. had served fourteen neighboring collective farms, with its 75 tractors, 30 combines, and 200 workers. When the war started, only women were left to operate the combines and tractors. The Germans came, some of the women escaped, some were driven into Germany, some were compelled to stay on and work. The Germans had dismantled all the tractors and combines, and planned to send the motors back to Germany.

"However," said Pimkin, "our people managed to substitute spoiled motors and pack them into the boxes shipped off, while they buried the good ones."

Out of their thirty women workers, fifteen were decorated for their wartime work. A third of their men had been killed. The rest were beginning to come back. Most of the M.T.S. workers are on the government payroll. Tractor drivers are paid by the collective farms for whom they work, averaging about 600 rubles a month, but often getting up to 2,000 as well as some payment in kind. Cherbinsky, they told me, a war invalid who was still able to operate a tractor, had earned 6,000 rubles and 100 poods of bread in the less than three months period since he had been

back from the front. The minimum 600 ruble wage is guaranteed during the winter months.

Pimkin introduced me to his leading lady tractorist, Maria Yevtushenko, a self-taught driver who took her sweetheart's place when he went to the front. He never came back. She became the leader of a brigade of Komsomol girls who tripled the norm assigned to them. We looked in on the office, where a group of girls were working. Two of them, it was whispered to me, had been slaves in Germany. "We never mention it now—they want to forget." I asked what message I should take back to the women of America. One spoke up: "Tell the American women to fight for the realization of the decisions of the Crimea conference!"

That night we were entertained at the home of Dr. Karp Wardbaranov, and his wife, both physicians. Their two daughters were nurses, and the whole family had operated a field hospital for the partisans, once working steadily for four days and four nights. They had a comfortable little house, which the Germans had occupied. Mrs. Wardbaranov served a dinner for about a dozen guests, among them the handsome young president of the Soviet, a captain with an empty right sleeve, invalided home before the end of the war. A little old deaf and dumb woman they had taken into the family long ago hovered around waiting on us. She had stayed during the occupation, trying to save the family's possessions. She had the most expressive face I have ever seen, and with dramatic gestures acted out what the Germans had done, much more eloquently than she could have told me in words. She had hidden in the attic, watching them, until they found her and made her serve them. The Germans left her pretty much alone, thinking she was harmless, but she managed to give valuable information to the partisans. She imitated the ugly arrogance and vulgarity of the Nazis as they ordered her around, gobbled the food she cooked, and drank themselves into a piggish state. She showed me how they stole everything, even the cow (she herself became a cow to explain this, her bony little fingers crooked into horns over her wrinkled forehead).

The same love and admiration I had heard so many times were expressed for Roosevelt, and questions about America were showered upon me. The Soviet chairman questioned me closely about the atom bomb. Was it true it had killed several hundred thousand people at one time? Would America use this great force

for creative ends? Could civilization survive an atomic war?

"What message shall I take the American people from the people of Azov?" I asked him.

"Tell them that the most important thing of all is friendship between our countries. The Soviet people have shown that they can fight and they will fight again if they have to. But they did not want this war, and they do not ever want to fight again. The war showed what we can do together. Who knows what would have happened if we had not been allies?

"There are many things we could purchase from America. When Lend-Lease was stopped, that was your business, of course. But right here in our own region we could use plenty of American machinery to replace what the Germans destroyed. We can make it ourselves—but it will take a long time. Wouldn't it help us both if we could buy more from your country too?"

The next day we visited some collective farms in the Azov region. Their general organization was similar to the one we had visited in the Gorky region, but they had suffered more, because the Germans had been here, and everything had to be built anew.

Here destruction had been heaped on destruction. Here was the scorched earth. As the Germans drew near, these people had driven off and sometimes killed their own cattle to save them from feeding the enemy. They themselves set fire to the farm buildings and homes that represented so many years of labor; destroyed with their own hands precious machinery. Fierce battles destroyed more property, and, when the Red Army came back, once again they had to destroy to repossess it.

I heard a great deal about what a good life they had known before the war, how the Germans took everything they had—their clothes, their bicycles, their radios, all their personal possessions. Here, too, the women had done all the work of the farms while the men were still at the front. But these women had seen far more of the actual horrors of the war and taken a more direct part in it. From the Ilyich kolkhoz ninety young girls had been driven into Germany as slaves, only half of whom returned.

"Come back in two years; you will not know us!" they called to me as we rode away. "We shall have our good life back again—and better than before."

CHAPTER VIII

SOVIET WOMEN

During the war, women all over the world drew inspiration and strength from the example of the women of the Soviet Union. Equal participants with their men in the hardships and rewards of the long, difficult process of building a new civilization, they were equal participants, too, in the long and bloody struggle to save this new civilization from destruction. When Hitler struck they took the places of their men in factories, mines, collective farms, or wherever their country needed them. They went to the front as nurses and doctors, and cooks. While not encouraged to enter the regular army, there were many who could not be denied. They operated machine guns, piloted fighter planes, acted as bombardiers. In the forests and swamps behind the enemy lines, they fought as guerrillas beside their men.

In the first days of the war, with death and destruction striking all around them, they formed a Soviet Women's Anti-Fascist Committee to rouse the women of their own country and the world to still greater effort against the enemy of mankind. Can we ever forget the message they sent us in those days? It read:

"Dear sisters, women throughout the world! Our liberty, the fate of our beloved children, of our brothers, husbands and loved one, lies in our own hands. This is no time for tears!

"A bitter and relentless fight against fascism until the complete victory is achieved over Hitler's hordes can alone save our nations and our families from slavery and shame. The Red Army is fighting heroically for liberty and the happiness of the entire human race. The future of the world is being fought out on the battlefields of the Soviet Union."

One of my assignments while in the Soviet Union was to carry greetings from the Committee of Women of the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship to the Soviet Women's Anti-Fascist Committee and to help open up new means of communication between the women of the two countries. The chairman of the Committee was Nina Popova, secretary of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. She and her co-workers on the committee whom I met in her office in the Palace of Labor were delighted to establish personal contact with our committee. Popova was a lovely-looking woman, with that air of serenity which seemed to mark all Soviet women, in spite of the years of war and the present strains of managing homes and families along with difficult and responsible jobs.

My question as to whether, now that the war was over, their committee would continue to function caused astonishment.

"It would be unthinkable to our Soviet women," Popova told me, "not to go on working to make sure that our sacrifices were not in vain. The struggle against fascism must go on until its last vestige is wiped out. We must do everything possible to strengthen the ties among the women of all the democratic countries, to help organize the lasting peace and security of all peoples."

I presented a long list, drawn up by our Women's Committee, of questions that touched on just every aspect of the public and private life of Soviet women. As Popova and the others scanned the list, they remarked that they wanted to know the same things about us.

To my question as to what they would like our interchange to accomplish, Popova answered:

"The first need, I should say, is to strengthen our friendship and through our friendship to exert real influence on the peace of the world. It would be good if your committee would try to answer some of the slanders against our people and our government, and spread information on the life and activities of Soviet women, to show how many common interests and problems we have.

"But, above all, we hope that American women will support every movement directed toward strengthening peace and smashing all attempts to disrupt friendship among the wartime Allies."

With some hesitation, I called attention to one of the items on our list that had to do with a project to send samples of new

fashion models, patterns, accessories, and cosmetics to the Soviet women. Did this suggestion seem a little frivolous to them?

"And what makes you think we are not feminine, too?" Popova shot back, amused. "We did not have time for such things during the war, that's true, but why shouldn't our women and girls want pretty clothes and accessories and jewelry and cosmetics? We, too, have fashion shows and beauty parlors!"

I brought up the question of the heavy work women were doing, which had been a particular concern to some of the C.I.O. delegation. Would the prewar prohibitions against women doing certain types of heavy work be restored?

"We are proud of our women who have worked in the mines and at heavy forges!" Popova exclaimed. "Our labor laws for the protection of women were never abrogated. Our women voluntarily waived them during the war. Many who held such jobs and became used to them want to keep on."

"In preparation for the November 7th anniversary our workers challenge each other to new production records. Some of our women forge tenders have been issuing challenges to others to continue at their heavy jobs! We have to hold these women back, because we definitely don't want to encourage women to continue in any work that may be physically injurious."

"No one asks our women to tend forges, no one asks them to climb up on high scaffolding and build houses. But they are coming forward as heroically in the reconstruction period as in war. Some want to leave their work and go home and raise families. But most want to continue their work and raise families too. We have to help them by putting our work with children on a still better basis. We are extending our system of maternity aid. We are organizing a new type of rest home where women can go in the last weeks before childbirth and have the best kind of prenatal care and freedom from household and other responsibilities."

Vassilieva, president of the Central Committee of the Railroad Workers' Union, spoke of the concern of the trade unions with measures to free women from household drudgery.

"We stand for a strong family," she said, "for comfortable home surroundings, for a friendly family which knows how to spend its time together in a cultured way. Freeing a woman from housecleaning, washing, and ironing will make it easier for her to handle her job and at the same time build a cosy home and a

stable and happy family life with her husband and her children."

To answer my questions about the new divorce regulations, they arranged for me to see Mariana Sabilla, a stately, Portia-like blonde, chairman of the Lawyers' Union and a practicing lawyer herself.

I told Sabilla that according to some American journalists it had become almost impossible to get a divorce in the Soviet Union.

"That's not true," said Sabilla. "The new law was passed to check the somewhat frivolous attitude toward marriage that had developed among some of our people. Now that it is a court matter, divorce is more difficult than before, but *anyone* who has serious reasons can get a divorce without much difficulty and I know of no case of denial where divorce was mutually sought."

The new procedure requires that the party desiring a divorce first publish a notice in the paper—no sensationalism—just the bare fact that so and so is seeking a divorce. Several such notices are usually to be seen in every issue of the *Evening Moscow*. Both parties are called to the People's Court for a preliminary hearing to establish the causes of discord, and attempt to bring about a reconciliation. If both sides seek the divorce, no attempt is made to force them to remain together, unless it is clearly a matter of some temporary quarrel that can be patched up. If only one side wishes the divorce, a greater effort to effect reconciliation is made.

If reconciliation proves impossible, lawyers are chosen for each side and the matter is brought before the higher court. The fee in the first instance is 100 rubles; for the higher court, it ranges from 500 to 2,000 rubles. The trade union legal department provides legal aid for divorce cases free of charge if they feel it is merited. Sabilla told me it could hardly happen that lack of funds would keep anyone with justifiable reasons for a divorce from getting it. The real deterrent, she said, was that the process was so much more complicated than before. Many people who would have rushed to get divorces when no court action was required now put off taking action and, in the delay, often discovered that they did not want a divorce after all. The action before the higher court could be in a closed or open session. About half of the people seeking divorces chose the former rather than undergo a public airing of their intimate affairs.

There are no rigidly specified legal grounds for divorce, but

in each case all the circumstances are taken into consideration.

"What grounds for divorce are acceptable to us?" She considered my question for a moment. "A frequent motive for seeking divorce, we find, is jealousy, and such cases have to be carefully investigated. A wife may suspect her husband whenever he stays away from home. We must determine whether the suspicions are justified. In such cases we cannot have hard and fast rules. Sometimes a jealous wife is so unreasonable, and so incapable of changing her nature, that it leads to incompatibility. Incompatibility we do not consider the best of grounds, but if it appears that two individuals simply can't live happily together, then incompatibility may be accepted.

"If one wants children and the other is sterile, this is considered acceptable grounds for divorce. Or if either husband or wife refuses to accept responsibility for the care of children or step-children, this would be considered legitimate grounds.

"Desertion by either husband or wife," said Sabilla, "would be acceptable grounds, but if there were children involved, or if either the wife or the husband was incapacitated for work, responsibility for support would have to be arranged. Adultery might be an acceptable ground, but again circumstances, especially during wartime, have to be considered. Some extra-marital relations during the war years have led to divorce, some not.

"Strong love for another than one's own wife or husband would be an acceptable ground—if it is a real and sincere love," Sabilla went on. "The court goes into such cases very carefully. For example, a seventy-year old man, married for forty-five years, fell in love with a twenty-year old girl and wanted a divorce. It was not granted. It would have brought tragedy to his wife and in the end, tragedy to the girl who, sooner or later, would have fallen in love with someone nearer her own age.

"But we must recognize the fact that sometimes a new love comes along—so strong it cannot be denied.

"We always have to think of the children. The children of broken families suffer, and that is why we go to such lengths to bring about reconciliation wherever possible. But we recognize that if the parents are really unhappy together, the children also suffer and this, too, is considered.

"Right now, many divorce cases in Moscow are provoked by crowded housing. Recently we had a case of a man and wife and

her mother sharing crowded quarters. The husband said constant quarreling had made life intolerable to him, though relations between him and his wife had always been good before. It was quite clear the housing situation was to blame. The judge advised getting other quarters, separate from the mother-in-law. The husband agreed and the court helped him find a place."

Since the new law went into effect, divorces in Moscow had dropped to about a third of the previous number. Sabilla felt that the law had led to a more serious attitude toward marriage. There had been a new rise in the divorce rate with the end of the war, which had brought about many tangled situations, but she felt this was temporary.

"Suppose," she explained, "a woman has remarried on the assumption that her husband was killed. Such cases are numerous. For permission to remarry, she had to go to court. If her documents proved to the court's satisfaction that the husband was dead, she was permitted to remarry. Then the husband turns up. He has the right to ask the court to annul the recognition of his death which cleared the way for his wife's remarriage. Naturally he does not want to be on record as a dead man. In such cases we straighten out the matter as to whether the first or second marriage is to stand, according to the wishes of the people concerned, who usually come to an equitable arrangement. If the first marriage relation is to be resumed, then the second marriage is annulled and no divorce is necessary. If the second marriage is to stand then the court simply corrects the legal record of the first husband's death, and again no divorce proceedings are necessary. The court steps in only when there is disagreement."

The discussion turned to the handling of child delinquency by the courts. In 1935, special children's courts had been abolished. In many cases of child delinquency adults were the real culprits, and it was then necessary to bring the adults to trial, rather than the children. For this reason, and to provide appropriate punishment for incorrigibles, the new decree provided that minors apprehended for theft, murder, or other serious offenses would come under the provisions of the criminal code.

Sabilla couldn't believe it when I told her about the stories peddled by people like Max Eastman that Soviet children, as a result of this decree, were subjected to the harshest penal measures, even to the death sentence. "Why, our very criminal code pro-

vides that no one under eighteen is subject to the death sentence, in any case!" she exclaimed. (The death penalty has since been completely abolished.)

"While it is true special juvenile courts were abolished some time ago, we organized special sections of people's courts to handle the more serious juvenile delinquency cases. It is required in such cases that the judge be one who understands child psychology, and the people's witnesses must be teachers, doctors, or psychiatrists. If the offense is a minor one, the judge is instructed to try to settle the matter at a preliminary hearing. Often the problem can be worked out with the parents, and the necessary measures taken through them. If it turns out that the parents are themselves to blame, it is necessary sometimes to help them, sometimes to put the child under the care of others. Orphans, of course, go to children's homes or are adopted. Repeated offenders may be sent to one of the labor colonies. Many have been reclaimed through these colonies and are useful citizens today."

About 70 per cent of the people's judges were women. Despite demobilization the proportion was expected to remain high, since more and more young women were attracted to the legal profession. Over fifty per cent of the students entering the juridical faculties were girls.

Like Popova, Sabilla wanted to know the same kind of thing about America that I had asked her about the Soviet Union—the divorce laws of different states, other laws concerning women and children, the status of the illegitimate child, and its mother, the determination of fatherhood, measures for the care of delinquent children, and so on.

Later I attended a divorce trial held in a small and informal courtroom. It was an open hearing, and about a dozen people had wandered in. They displayed little curiosity in the proceedings and were apparently there on legal business of their own.

This was a consent case and neither spouse was represented by counsel. The woman judge briefly summarized the facts from the documents before her. The wife had deserted a few months after marriage, because she objected to looking after the husband's three children by a former wife. The judge then asked each party to make statements. These confirmed the data in her summary. The two lay associate judges asked a few questions and the court retired, returning in about five minutes with a decision

granting the divorce. Each party was taxed 500 rubles costs and ten days were allowed for an appeal to the Supreme Court of the R.S.F.S.R. Since both parties had agreed on the divorce, obviously there would be no appeal.

A story in the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of July 26, 1945, had stirred up a lively discussion. Captain Olga and Andrey, commander of her regiment, had fallen in love during the war. Andrey has a wife and a nine-year old daughter. When the war ends, Andrey, promising Olga to return to her, goes home to tell his wife what has happened. Olga impatiently awaits him, recalling the joys and the sufferings of their two years together at the front. At last the expected knock comes and Olga rushes joyously to greet her lover, opens the door, and finds instead a small, pale, blonde woman with sorrowful gray eyes—Andrey's wife. Beside herself, first with disappointment, and then rage at the thought that Andrey, lacking courage to come himself, has sent his wife, she is heedless at first of what the woman says, and it is some time before Olga realizes that Andrey does not know that his wife has come.

"Do not blame him," the wife says. "He is an honest person, a big person. He does not know I am here. He loves you. . . . yet our life together was not just a casual thing; there were good, happy days and years. . . . But he never loved me the way he does you. . . . You are strong and big, like he is himself, you have a right to happiness with him. And I—we have been through so much together. We lost three children—only one is left. Together we have cherished her. . . . She has been waiting for her father for four years and now she will not leave his side. We all sat up together all night; she would not go to bed. If he leaves us, he will not be happy. Nor will he be happy with us—without you. He knows this and suffers unbearably. We both love him. . . . Let us decide this together. . . . But we must not blame each other, Olga. No one is guilty here. . . ."

Olga looks into the sad eyes of the wife and suddenly sees in her plain features torn with grief and sacrifice something extraordinarily beautiful and noble. They embrace and Olga sends her back to her husband.

Letters poured into *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, some defending Olga, most defending the wife. One of the letters published was

from a group of young officers who not long before had been fighting in the front lines. They violently disapproved of the sympathy shown in the story for Olga and the condescension shown the plain little wife, for whom the superior Olga gives up her lover as a noble, self-sacrificing gesture. They ended the letter with a warning to wives and mothers: "Look out—Olga prowls among you!"

Some Americans I talked with scoffed at the presumed "puritanical attitude" the discussion showed. There may be some tendency in that direction, but if so, it seems to me a wholly natural and even necessary tendency to counteract the wartime disruption of family life. Men and women, separated from their own families, faced together the daily, momentary prospect of death and snatched what happiness they could. All through the war, public opinion consciously strove to protect and preserve the family. Constantine Simonov's poem, "Wait for Me," written to his wife, sold in many millions of copies, and was made into a movie.

I was eager to know what Alexandra Kollontai felt about these things. Years ago, in my book, *Women in Soviet Russia*, I had written about her views. In the early chaotic years after the Revolution, Kollontai had defended "free love," whether extra-marital or non-marital—not as a final solution, but as necessary during the days of revolutionary change when work must come first and joy be snatched wherever it was found. But her views met with opposition. Professor Zalkind, for example, who polemized against her, went to the extreme not only of advocating continence before marriage and complete monogamy, but wanted even to do away with flirting, coquetry, jealousy—and to confine the sex act to reproduction.

Lenin, in his famous discussion with Clara Zetkin in 1920, took a position which has become the accepted attitude in the Soviet Union:

"The changed attitude of the young people to questions of sexual life is of course based on a 'principle' and a theory. Many of them call their attitude 'revolutionary' and 'Communitic.' And they honestly believe it is so. That does not impress us old people. Although I am not a gloomy ascetic, the so-called 'new sexual life' of the youth—and sometimes of the old—often seems to me to be purely bourgeois, an extension of bourgeois brothels. That has

nothing whatever in common with freedom of love as we Communists understand it. You must be aware of the famous theory that in Communist society the satisfaction of sexual desires, of love, will be as simple and unimportant as drinking a glass of water. This glass of water theory has made our young people mad, quite mad. It has proved fatal to many young boys and girls. Its adherents maintain that it is Marxist. . . .

"Of course, thirst must be satisfied. But will the normal man in normal circumstances lie down in the gutter and drink out of a puddle, or out of a glass with a rim greasy from many lips? But the social aspect is most important of all. Drinking water is of course an individual affair. But in love two lives are concerned, and a third, a new life, arises. It is that which gives it its social interest, which gives rise to a duty toward the community. . . .

"I don't mean to preach asceticism by my criticism. Not in the least. Communism will not bring asceticism, but joy of life, power of life, and a satisfied love life will help to do that. But in my opinion the present widespread hypertrophy in sexual matters does not give joy and force to life, but takes it away. In the age of revolution that is bad, very bad.

"Young people, particularly, need the joy and force of life. Healthy sport, swimming, racing, walking, bodily exercises of every kind, and many-sided intellectual interests. Learning, studying, inquiry, as far as possible in common. That will give young people more than eternal theories and discussions about sexual problems and the so-called 'living to the full.' Healthy bodies, healthy minds! Neither monk nor Don Juan, nor the intermediate attitude of the German Philistines."

Despite his differences with Kollontai on questions of sex and, on some occasions, on matters of politics too, Lenin had always held her in high esteem. She was the first woman to be appointed a People's Commissar, having been Commissar of Social Welfare in the early days of the Soviet Republic. Later she was the first woman of any country to be appointed ambassador, first to Mexico, then Norway, then Sweden. Long before the Revolution, Kollontai had given up the comforts and privileges of the aristocratic life to which she was born to work for the emancipation of women and of the workers, and her book on conditions of women in Russia, as well as on labor and social legislation in all countries affecting women, was an important contribution to the

women's movement. She has served her country well and is a beloved figure among the Soviet people.

My opportunity to see her came one day when I was visiting the Litvinov's in their Moscow apartment. Ivy Litvinov was going to see Kollontai and suggested that I go along. Kollontai had suffered a stroke in Sweden. She had carried on from a wheel chair as long as she was able, and a few months before had returned to Moscow for treatment. She is partially paralyzed and seldom goes out, but her gay and dauntless personality still gleams in her eyes and in her conversation. Her exquisitely appointed little apartment is hung with pictures of friends from all over the world, and portraits of herself in different periods of her life, bearing eloquent testimony to her beauty. She can do little now but read, and begged for new books from America. We ate dainty little sandwiches and cakes, delicious chocolates, tea with lemon, then still a luxury in Moscow. Kollontai recalled with pleasure and nostalgia her experiences as Ambassadors and her recent years in Sweden. Then we spoke of Constantine Oumansky, whom she had known and loved, and the terrible tragedy of his loss in an airplane accident, and what a blessing it had been for Raya, his wife, that she was killed with him. It would have been impossible for her to have gone on living after the double tragedy—they had lost their beautiful daughter just before their last trip to Mexico.

She showed me the Swedish edition of her book about her early life. She wanted to know if I were planning to write a book, advising me, if I did so, to "keep it light, as though you were writing letters to someone." I told her that in my book on Soviet women written in 1928, I had devoted a lot of space to her early writing and especially to her controversy with Dr. Zalkind. She looked amused. Then I told her that some of my friends in America were somewhat troubled by the tightening up of divorce laws. She nodded understandingly.

"You must remember, my dear," she said, "what this war has done to families. Not only in the Soviet Union but all over Europe. Remember how many years the men have been away from their homes, how many families have been shattered. Now the most important thing is to restore family life. Many things you see now in our country are the consequence of the war—never forget that. You must also remember that because of the war the government has not been able to give as much care to children as it had

planned, and more things must be done for them at home. For this family conditions must be made the best possible."

I brought up the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* story of Olga and Andrey. She had not read it so I summarized the story and the reactions to it I had heard, mentioning that I myself could not help having some sympathy for Olga.

Her first reaction was: "Don't worry too much about Olga—there will always be Olgas, and they will know how to take care of themselves." Then more seriously, "Just the same, you are right to have sympathy for Olga. Olga has her rights, too, and we must not forget them. . . ."

At a stirring exhibit depicting the work of Soviet women in wartime I saw the record of the contributions made by Soviet women to victory. Statistical charts, photographs, and paintings portrayed the self-sacrificing labor and heroism of the millions of simple women, and of the many thousands who had won special acclaim by outstanding accomplishments.

In tsarist Russia, out of 2,300,000 working women, 1,300,000 had been domestic servants in cities, 750,000 hired laborers in the villages. Few women were in the professions and there were almost no women engineers or scientists. Since the revolution millions of women have gone into industry, including the most highly skilled jobs. By 1941, when war came to the country, there were 170,000 women engineers, (by 1946, there were 250,000); 650,000 women teachers (750,000 in 1946); 73,000 women doctors (100,000 in 1946); over 33,000 women scientific workers; over 9,000 women agronomists. Today 25,000 women hold scientific titles and 199 have won Stalin prizes. Fifteen thousand women are chairmen of collective farms, and a quarter of a million head tractor brigades. Half a million women are members of local Soviets, 1,700 are deputies to the Supreme Soviets of the Union and Autonomous Republics; 277, about 24 per cent, are deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

About half of all the students in the higher educational institutions are women. Membership of women in the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. rose from 323,000 in 1931 to over a million in 1947 (when the total membership was 6,300,000). The percentage of women members was higher than this before the war when it reached about 30 per cent. The drop can probably be explained

by the entry of large numbers of Red Army men into the party during the war.

In Chapter VI, I have written of the women who hold leading positions in the Azerbaidzhanian Soviet Socialist Republics. There was nothing exceptional about this. The exhibit showed that in three autonomous republics, women hold the highest government positions. Zoya A. Andreyeva is chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Chuvash Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic; Pasha Sidorova holds the same position in the Yakut A.S.S.R., and Gunsum Tsydekova in the Buryat-Mongolian A.S.S.R.

A woman, W. V. Sarycheva, is assistant chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the R.S.F.S.R. The Minister of Justice of the Turkoman Soviet Socialist Republic is Nura Karazhayeva. At the age of thirteen Nura had been sold in marriage to an old Turkmenian who paid the handsome price of two camels for her. After the Revolution, she divorced him and went to school for the first time, graduating from law school. The Minister of Light Industry of the Turkoman S.S.R. is also a woman, Bakhti Altybayeva. E. A. Paldon is Minister of Social Welfare of the Latvian S.S.R.; Olga Lauriston holds the same post in the Estonian S.S.R.; Fatima Kadyebayeva is Chief Justice of the Kirghizian S.S.R.'s Supreme Court. Fourteen women, or 20 per cent, are Justices of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. Many other women in high posts in government as well as every other sphere of life were pictured.

Charts and photographs showed the vast network of institutions for mother and child care in which the Soviet Union leads the world—the creches and kindergartens, the women's and children's clinics and consultation centers, the milk kitchens, the children's hospitals and sanatoria, the maternity beds and special homes for expectant mothers. All these institutions are to be found in the most remote sections of the Far North and Central Asia as well as in the more developed centers.

There were pictures of the summer camps where millions of children were cared for during the war—3,625,000 in the summer of 1945 (by 1946 the number had risen to 6,000,000).

There were pictures of the sixty-seven women who became Heroes of the Soviet Union, of many others who won decorations. Here was Kosogorova, an engineer before the war, first woman to

manage a mine; and pictures of a group of women who took over and operated a mine near Rostov when the men went out to defend their city; Ivanova, who helped construct the road across Lake Ladoga, working twenty hours at a stretch in the icy cold; Major Bershanskaya, commander of the women's night bomber brigade, which counted sixteen Heroes of the Soviet Union; Smirnova, one of her brigade, who made 900 combat flights. These women were now pictured back at their peacetime pursuits as singers, teachers, students, housewives. Here was Liudmilla Pavlichenko, crack sniper, who visited the United States during the war, now studying for her doctor's degree at the Kiev Institute of History. The stories of the beloved guerrilla heroine, Zoya Kosmodemianskaya, and others like her, were graphically shown.

One section showed the work of the women of other countries in the war. My guide told me they were eagerly awaiting an exhibit on Women of the United States in Wartime. This was later received, through the help of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Nina Popova, at the gala opening of the exhibit, said: "In their work in industry and transport, in agriculture, in Red Cross organizations and in service with the United States Army, the women of the United States have shown themselves worthy daughters of their country and have won the heartfelt sympathy of Soviet women. I am confident that the collaboration of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., which was strengthening in the years of struggle with fascism, will grow and develop in pursuit of a common aim—the complete eradication of fascist aggression and the reactionary forces which are trying to hinder the establishment of a lasting world peace."

A group of women workers from a Moscow textile mill wrote: "The exhibition vividly shows the work done by the women of America in the war and their heroic effort for the victory of progressive mankind over fascism."

"Glory to American women who have done so much for victory," wrote scientist Lena Stern.

CHAPTER IX

EDUCATION IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

In 1943, in the midst of the war, an Academy of Pedagogical Sciences was established in the R.S.F.S.R. as a research institution.

During my visit to Moscow its first postwar conference was held. About 900 people took part, including representatives of the other Soviet republics and guests from Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

THE ACADEMY OF PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES

The Academy has three main divisions—Pedagogy, Methodology, Psychology. At the time of my visit it had already established six institutions: On the Theory and History of Pedagogy; Educational Technique and Methods; Psychology; Defectology; Social Hygiene and Children's Toys; a seventh on Pedagogical Education was to open in 1946. The Academy and its institutes were staffed by 750 scientific workers and about 400 non-staff collaborators. The experimental bases included twenty-six schools and one normal school. Also under its jurisdiction were a pedagogical library, a museum and the long established Central House for the Art Training of Children, where methods of testing, encouraging, and training children's creative talents were developed.

The Academy is deeply concerned with drawing on the best of the material bequeathed by the classic representatives of Russian pedagogy. It also concerns itself with the history of educational thought among the non-Russian people of the U.S.S.R., the other

Slavic peoples, and the newest developments in pedagogical practice and theory in Europe, America, and the Orient.

During the preceding year members of the Academy gave some 1,000 lectures to teachers' conferences in Moscow and other places, and sent representatives to different sections of the country to help with local problems. Publication projects of the Academy include an eight-volume Pedagogical Encyclopedia and a Children's Encyclopedia. There was particular interest, at the time of my visit, in the new magazine *The School and the Family* to be issued monthly, with an initial circulation of 50,000. The Academy publishes another monthly, *Soviet Pedagogy*, and a bulletin.

In his opening speech at the conference, V. P. Potemkin, president of the Academy, stressed the importance in Soviet education of instilling qualities of humanism, love of country, and a democratic world view.

I. A. Kairov, vice president of the Academy, in his conference address, observed:

"Recognizing the capacity of human nature for change and growth, dialectical materialism does not deny the importance of heredity, but its role in determining human character is, from the point of view of the dialectical materialist, limited. We cannot therefore consider the child as a clean slate on which nothing is written and on which you may write anything you wish. In order that hereditary or innate possibilities of development should be realized, proper conditions are necessary and of these proper conditions of education are the most decisive.

"Under socialist conditions, for the first time in history, there is a possibility of harmonizing the influence of family, school, and the broader social environment. Developing on these new social foundations, the school in the Soviet Union has become a decisive force. Education is not omnipotent, but it can have great power if it is used wisely."

Among the subjects reported on and discussed at the conference were: The Present Status and Current Problems of Pedagogical Science; Formalism in Learning and How to Avoid it; Russian Language Culture; Processes of Thinking and Memory in School Children; Problems of Tedium and Fatigue; Psychology of Individual Approach to Students; Moral Training; Linking School and Family Training.

The day I visited the conference, I heard a discussion on

"Training in Love of Work." Leading the discussion, Academician I. F. Svadkovsky observed in substance:

It is highly important to guard against overstrain. If children become overfatigued, naturally they will not enjoy what they are doing. Work that seems useless becomes torture. There must be satisfaction in the work. The younger the children, the more immediate must be the results. It is absolutely essential that the child himself fully understands the purpose of what he is doing. As soon as one task is fully mastered, the child must go on to others.

Thus, the doer must have a sense of completing a job, and the task must have foreseeable results. It is also important that there should be a combination of physical and mental work, so that some creative interest should always be introduced over and above pure physical labor.

Being part of a group with common interests adds new incentives. Children work better in a collective. But the group must be small enough so that the child can be fully aware of his own contribution and have a sense of accomplishment. Success is the best instructor. Both parents and teachers should be able not only to tell children how to do things, but to do them well themselves.

As to the relation of work to play, little children, of course, want to play, and this should not be interfered with—only directed. Nature, itself, constantly attracts children to play and movement. When children are out in the fields, they pull up weeds and flowers. So in our children's homes we direct this instinctive play into useful channels. We organize the children to gather vegetables from the garden; to pick edible mushrooms in the woods or wild berries. Through such small things we open the way to more important tasks.

Participants in the lively discussion that followed included teachers who had fought in the Red Army and were just back, still in uniform, to resume their profession.

First to enter the discussion after Svadkovsky's report was a teacher from Georgia, who described his experiences in a children's home which had gotten entirely out of hand. The place was a mess, the children undisciplined, and the staff demoralized. He discovered that none of the children had been given any chores or responsibilities. They were being punished for not doing what they had never been properly organized to do. As soon as the children

were drawn into the day-to-day work of running the home, the whole atmosphere changed. Instead of punishments, a system of simple rewards was introduced. The names of students who performed their tasks best, whether making beds, cutting wood, or planting vegetables, were posted each week. Soon the worst punishment came to be omission of their names from this list.

Leavin, a young teacher from Cheliabinsk, spoke up. "In the first fifteen years of our education under the Soviet system we not only destroyed much of the old system (even some good things which later we had to restore) but we also built many new things. We made many mistakes in that period of laboratory work, overemphasis on labor in education, and so on, but there were many positive factors in our work. When we corrected those mistakes, I think to some extent we overcorrected, that we threw out the baby with the bath. In the first period our schools were crowded with workshops and machinery. But in the next, there were schools which eliminated all handwork and went back almost completely to the old system. During the war, of necessity, that was changed again. Our children were engaged in many-sided activities in addition to their lessons. I think we must make the fullest use of the experience of the war years—and this time keep what was best in it."

Professor Shapiro, of the Department of Moral Training of the Institute of Pedagogy, said: "Moral training is also necessary. Labor alone is not enough. That was shown by the experience of the Nazis. They taught their young people to work—but look at their moral attitude. Not work in itself must be glorified, but the meaning of work for the material and spiritual well-being of our people. Moral training must come both through the family and the school."

The question of closer connections between the family and the school was a topic of general discussion while I was in the U.S.S.R. They were making up for time lost in the war when so many children had been denied normal family supervision. In the September 21 issue of *Trud*, the trade union newspaper, I read an article on "The Duties of Parents" by L. Raskin of the Leningrad Institute for Teacher Training. He wrote that some parents seemed to feel that loving their children was enough, but parenthood required also talent, a profound knowledge of life and a sense of responsibility. It was the obligation of the parents to place definite

responsibilities, however small they might be, on their children.

"Parents must always be sincere with their children, and have confidence in them," wrote Raskin. "It isn't necessary to probe into all the interests of a child. Parents can't simply order a child 'open up your heart to me.' They must be sensitive and understanding. If a child is accorded confidence, he will return it. It is necessary to discuss things with children as equal members of the family.

"Parents must strive to develop the most noble traits of character—honesty, truthfulness, sincerity, dignity, modesty. This cannot be done by mere empty moralizing, but through example, through acquainting children with the characters of the finest people in history and contemporary life. Parents should give attention to politeness, cultured habits, good manners, grammatical speech, kindness to others. These things are not only external attributes, but the expression of inner character; they come from a sense of the real dignity of the human being, from a real respect and concern for other individuals."

He warned how disastrous an effect disharmony in the home can have on the child. He suggested that all enterprises should hold meetings for parents, devoted to these questions—that the Communist Party, Komsomol and trade union organizations should pay attention to these things.

Reading in Soviet periodicals of the work of the Academy, after my return to America, I have seen some severe criticisms of its work. It has apparently not yet succeeded in sufficiently generalizing experiences gained from its activities. These criticisms are a measure of the seriousness with which the Soviet authorities and public take these problems. Great emphasis is laid on the fact that teaching is one of the higher callings, and that, along with teaching ability and the need to keep constantly improving their own knowledge and ability to impart it, teachers must, above all, love the young people in their care and approach them as friends, with a sensitive understanding of their individual problems.

FROM THE NURSERIES UP

Schools had been kept going to a remarkable extent during the war. But for millions of youngsters adequate schooling was a war casualty. Suffice it to recall that 84,000 schools with all their

equipment were wholly or partially destroyed by the invaders.

In my observations of the reconstruction work during my visit I tried to find out what was being done at each stage of the Soviet educational program. I was unable to make the fundamental study the subject deserves, so I present my observations rather as samplings than a complete picture.

There is an integrated system of education practically from birth. Educational elements introduced into the regime of the day nurseries (under the supervision of the Ministry of Health), lead directly into the educational program of the kindergartens (under the supervision of the ministry of Education) which in turn leads into that of the regular schools.

Despite the destruction, kindergarten facilities were already back at the pre-war figure, and expanding, the goal being to provide facilities for all children of kindergarten age, whose families desired them. The number of children in kindergartens, on January 1, 1945, was 1,000,000. Two years later, it had reached 1,500,000. Together with seasonal playgrounds as on the collective farms, 5,000,000 children had kindergarten care in 1948.

In Moscow, I visited the Yava kindergarten, connected with the cigarette factory of that name. It had 120 children, from four to six years old.

Its regime was the customary one worked out by the Ministry of Education, differences in application depending on the individual directors. Here greater attention was paid to the physical training of the children than could be considered entirely typical, since this subject was the specialty of Klavdia Verbitskaya, the director. Through this comprehensive physical training program, most of the psychological effects of the war had been overcome. Verbitskaya felt that the first essential was that the children have strong, healthy bodies and with that, most nervous conditions would pass. Nevertheless, there seemed to be an equal emphasis on psychological and emotional factors. The idea that children require love and affection above all is basic in the whole Soviet program of child care.

A close connection is maintained between children and parents at all times. In this particular factory a large proportion of the workers are women, practically all of whom leave their children in the kindergarten. About ninety per cent of the children stay only for the day. The mothers of the rest work on the night shift, and

take their children home over Sundays. Such work is staggered, so that none will have to be away from home nights for a long period.

Frequent visits to the factory are arranged so that the children may see their mothers at work, and they have regular two-way communication over the factory broadcasting system for mothers and children. Parents take turns being on duty for special hours at the kindergarten. The kindergarten personnel work with the mothers, helping them adjust home conditions, as closely as possible, to the kindergarten regime, and to train the children to be neat, self-reliant and orderly.

The kindergarten children are divided into five groups of twenty-five each with two attendants working six hours a day, in two shifts. In addition, there is the director, housekeeper, consultant, a doctor, a trained nurse, and the kitchen and cleaning personnel.

The children are brought to the kindergarten between seven and eight-thirty, depending on when their parents go to work. They are bathed, their own clothing put into individual lockers, and they are examined by the doctor. Then they are dressed in their kindergarten clothes and given brief setting-up exercises. After breakfast, they have lessons, educational play, drawing, work with materials. The youngest group has only about ten minutes of lessons, the older group twenty to thirty minutes. Then they are out of doors, winter or summer, for about two hours of play or excursions. Lunch is at one-thirty, followed by "dead-hour"—naps in a well-aired room. Up again at three for quiet play. The older group keep albums, learn the elementals of art and music, and speech development through poetry recitation and story telling. At three-thirty tea, then out again for walk or play until supper, from five-thirty to six. Mothers who are through with their work earlier call for their children before, others after supper. In the summer the group is taken care of in a "dacha" (summer cottage) outside of Moscow.

There had been no attempt to keep the knowledge of the war from the children. On the contrary, everything was done, as in normal times, to make them feel a part of the life of the country.

The Yava kindergarten children had close contacts with the Red Army, because most of their fathers were in the army.

They started a correspondence with front line soldiers, an album of which Verbitskaya proudly showed me. She read me a few and then came to one signed Uncle Grisha.

"There's a story behind this," she said. "Back in April 1942, our children heard a Red Army man broadcasting from Kharkov—Sergeant Grigory Koslin. He said that when Kharkov was captured by the Germans his wife had been killed, but he didn't know what had become of his little daughter Svetlana. He begged anyone who had any news of his daughter to let him know. The children were so excited they could talk of nothing else. Finally they wrote this letter:

" 'Dear Sergeant Grisha:

" 'We heard you on the radio. We wish we could help you find Svetlana. We haven't your little daughter here in our kindergarten, but we have three Svetlanas and maybe you'll pretend they are your daughters until you find your own. Anyway, we'll ask every Svetlana we meet whether she is Svetlana Koslin. Please write to us and tell us what happens.'

"After a while this answer came:

" 'Dear Children: You can't imagine how happy it made me to get your letter. I haven't found my Svetlana, but the next best thing was to receive such a wonderful letter from you. I've had lots of letters since my broadcast, but yours was the best of all. I know each one of you has a brother or father at the front whom you want to see. Never mind, kids, pretty soon the day will come when our Red Army with the armies of our Allies will destroy the Hitlerites and raise over Berlin the banner of victory. And your fathers and brothers will come back to you. Then life will gush up like a fountain. Such a life we will have then—such a good, gay and wonderful life! That's what we are fighting for—for a new happy life for us all, for a gay happy childhood for all our children. I wish for you, dear children, the best of health, and that you will grow up to help your mothers and fathers. I kiss you warmly.

" 'Your Uncle Grisha' "

He had added a postscript: "To the workers on the kindergarten staff, my front-line greetings. I ask you to take good care of the children. Try never to hurt their feelings in any way. Please send me photos of all the children, and tell me about their life, which ones are naughty and why, and which are the best behaved."

So the children kept on writing, and the teachers too. A letter from Uncle Grisha was always a holiday at the kindergarten.

"Then one day," Verbitskaya went on, "around Christmas, 1943, an attendant came running to me. 'Klavdia Vassilievna,' she

said, 'there's a Red Army man outside the door—he's been there about ten minutes. He doesn't knock or anything, and I called to him out of the window, but I can't make out what he wants.' So I went to the door, and there was this Red Army man, looking very embarrassed. 'I'm Uncle Grisha,' he said.

"I embraced him and pulled him inside, and while he was taking off his coat I rushed upstairs and told the children, 'Do you know who has come—Uncle Grisha!' It's impossible to describe the pandemonium. When Uncle Grisha came upstairs the children swarmed all over him. They all tried to sit on his lap at once, kissed him and hugged him and ruffled his hair. They pulled him this way and that to show him everything. They all shouted at once about all the things they had been doing—how they had put caviar in the aquarium to make new fishes but nothing had happened. There never was such a day. I never saw anyone so happy as Sergeant Grisha. He hadn't found his own Svetlana, but I think this made it up to him a little.

"After that, the children simply showered him with letters. They kept hearing from him right up to the end of the war. Now the war is over, they haven't heard from him for some months—they are so worried that something happened to him at the very last moment. But we're still counting on his turning up."

When the children swarmed around me asking questions about American children, smothering me with embraces, I got a taste of what Sergeant Grisha must have felt.

This was only one of many kindergartens I visited. Every large factory or institution has one or more kindergartens attached to it. In addition, there are district kindergartens and apartment house kindergartens for children of professional people or those working in establishments too small to have their own kindergartens.

Fees were nominal, in all cases amounting to less than the cost of caring for the child at home. The fee varies according to wages and where even a small fee might constitute a hardship, arrangements may be made through the trade union for free kindergarten care.

While equipment varied somewhat in different places, I was impressed everywhere by the cleanliness, the adequacy of the food, and above all by the effectiveness of the kindergarten regime reflected in the alert intelligence of the children, their freedom

from self-consciousness, their air of well-being and happiness, the warm, affectionate attitude between personnel and children.

THE TEN-YEAR SCHOOL

Soviet schools are divided into the four- or five-year school (elementary), the seven-year school, or "junior secondary," and the ten-year or secondary school. The four-year schools are confined chiefly to the smaller villages, but usually there are higher grade schools within easy access.

The same educational facilities are extended to all the nearly two hundred different nationalities of the U.S.S.R. The children of every nationality receive their education in their native tongue, adding Russian in the second grade.

Boys and girls enter the ten-year school at seven (formerly it was eight), and after graduation are ready for college. The first seven years are compulsory in industrial areas and will soon be in rural localities as well. After that the student decides whether to go on through the tenth year, or enter a vocational school. During the war many young people went directly into industry without completing their schooling, continuing their education in the F.Z.O. (factory night school), or the night schools for farm youth. The director of Boys' School No. 135, in Moscow, told me that now about ninety per cent of the boys were expected to remain through the ten classes. Before the war the plan had been to make education compulsory through ten classes and before long this plan will probably be revived. There are, of course, no private schools.

Schooling is entirely free up to the eighth grade. In the eighth, ninth, and tenth grades tuition is 200 rubles a year. In Moscow, that is; elsewhere it is lower. Orphans, children of Red Army men, or those in special need are exempted. Actually no one is held back by this small fee. The general growth of Soviet education may be gauged by the fact that the number of children in Soviet schools (elementary and secondary) rose from 7,900,000 in 1914-15, to 33,200,000 in 1948.

In the schools I visited in Moscow, I found that the buildings were modern and adequate but their facilities were overtaxed, because of Moscow's swollen population, being used in two and often three shifts. In the boys' school each class had its special hall with decorations often done by the children themselves. The

girls' school was similar in its general lay-out, but had more flowers and plants, fancier curtains, more frills.

The director of the Girls' School was Ekaterina Martianova, a vigorous old lady of over seventy, somewhat tart in her manner, but underneath sensitive and understanding. She had been a deputy to the Moscow Soviet since 1939. (I learned later that she was the inspiration for Maria Smirnova's warm and moving film *Village Teacher* shown in America in 1948, in which Vera Maret-skaya plays the role of the teacher.)

What Martianova told me on the question of separate education of boys and girls coincided with what I had heard from other teachers. She reminded me that it was incorrect to say that the system of co-education had been rejected in the Soviet Union. Rather the co-existence of the two systems had been accepted, mixed schools and separate schools existing side by side. Separate secondary schools for boys and girls have been established in the big cities and some industrial centers, but co-education continues in rural and small town schools. The overwhelming majority of Soviet youth are still studying in mixed institutions. There is no separation of the sexes in the higher educational institutions, where women make up about 43 per cent of the student body. Men and women teachers instruct in both boys' and girls' schools.

Soviet educators, Martianova told me, reject any claim that women are intellectually inferior to men or less gifted in mathematics or any other field. She said in her fifty years of teaching, she had seen no differences, except, perhaps, that girls were a little more conscientious, inclined to be better disciplined, while boys, as a rule, were more aggressive and got more attention from the teachers in mixed classes. She said her own experience had been that the girls developed better and less self-consciously when taught separately from the boys. The boys and girls met often, both in after school "circles" and on social occasions, and the conditions of Soviet life offered the fullest possible opportunities for normal boy and girl companionship.

Going over the school curriculum in both the boys' and girls' schools, I found them exactly the same in basic studies; native language and literature, mathematics, science, geography, etc. Political education is not taught as a separate subject, but is brought in in connection with special subjects. A course on the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is given in the seventh grade. English

—and less often French or Spanish—begins in the fourth grade, replacing German. The curriculum is similar to that in American schools, with more emphasis on science and on history. Physics begins in the sixth class, chemistry in the seventh. Natural history is taught in every class up to the tenth, where astronomy is substituted. Mechanical drawing begins in the sixth class, for boys and girls alike. The only difference in the programs was that girls were now learning sewing and other domestic tasks, while the boys were taught certain types of military exercises, unnecessary for girls. Military training for girls was chiefly first aid work. (During 1948 all military training for girls was abolished.) Different types of gymnastic exercises were given to the boys and girls.

In addition to the after-school work in circles of art, music, drama, science, etc., there are lectures where the children, themselves, give reports and hold discussions on domestic, political, and international matters. In both the boys' and girls' schools I was told of the special interest America holds for the children.

The year following my visit, logic and psychology were introduced in the higher grades for both boys and girls.

Examinations are held at the end of each school year from the fourth to the tenth class. The grades given for class work and examinations are as follows: 5—excellent; 4—good; 3—fair; 2—poor; 1—failed. Those who receive 5 in everything in their final examination get a gold medal, those who receive 5 in four subjects and 4 in one, a silver medal.

Martianova said the Komsomol organization played an important part in the life of the school, helping to maintain a high level of scholarship.

While we were talking, a pretty dark-haired girl named Anya, the Komsomol leader of the school, came in, and from her I learned that the Komsomol organization also helps direct the younger girls, especially those in the Pioneer organization.

"We help look after the younger children," said Anya. "We help supervise the hot lunches the school provides for children whose mothers work, and we stay with many of them until their mothers come home. Each girl in the older classes has responsibility for a girl in a lower class. If her charge needs clothings, she reports it to the teacher and helps to get these things. We work in pairs—a pair to each apartment house. We check upon whether all children of school age are at school, and visit the families to see if any

special help is needed. We sometimes help with homework."

Martianova took me around to see some of the classrooms. The seventh grade class on Russian literature was studying Pushkin. The girl who was reciting gave amazingly thorough and well-rounded answers to all the questions the teacher put to her. She covered the different periods of Pushkin's career, his earlier, more romantic period, the literary and political influences that determined his creative development, giving quotations from his work to illustrate each point she made. It struck me that these thirteen- and fourteen-year olds were getting the kind of intensive study that we would only find in universities. Naturally they do not study all their literary figures so thoroughly; Pushkin holds a special place.

"Our school has a tradition," Martianova told me, "of encouraging work outside the class room, which is of course an important part of the work of all our schools; and all my teachers try to get their students to do more research and independent work. We use many visual education methods and have a considerable amount of laboratory work. We always try to link our studies with real life problems."

I asked the girls what they were planning to be when they grew up. They all seemed to have pretty definite ideas. Elena planned to be a radio engineer. Rita said, "I play the piano, I'll enter the Conservatory." Vera wanted to be a doctor. When I asked her why, she answered, "To help other people." Manya's passion was literature and she wrote poetry. Anya was torn between chemistry and physics. Lila would be a biologist, Katya a geologist, Natasha a mathematician. Another girl planned to specialize in English, another in teaching, two chose the theater for their profession, one technological engineering, and three planned to become historians.

Assistance to boys and girls in choosing their professions begins in all schools during the seventh year. Representatives from the higher educational institutions visit the schools and invite the pupils to attend "Open Door" day. The young visitors are shown around the university buildings and classrooms. Professors are on hand to tell them about the work in different subjects. In addition, each class has a special director, chosen from among the teachers, who consults with the parents, learns the children's inclinations from them as well as from the children themselves, and helps plan their future training.

I asked Martianova whether there had been any problem of delinquency during the war years.

"In general," she answered, "my girls are normal and well behaved. There is practically no rough talking or behavior, and was not all through the war. It would be a sensation if anything like that happened. When we have any difficulties, we call the girl's whole class together to consider the question. After the girls give their opinions, the teacher gives hers. If any special measures have to be taken to help out at home, the Komsomols help. We use social opinion as our means of bringing pressure. Our girls do not like to have the bad opinion of others. Of course, whatever final measures are taken are up to the teacher. I have never had a case of expulsion."

Martianova gave me one of the individual "Student Tickets" listing twenty rules of conduct, issued to all students in the fifth grade and over. These rules emphasize industrious study habits "to become an educated and cultured citizen," obedience to the school authorities and teachers, orderliness and politeness, both in and out of school; abstinence from coarse language, from smoking and gambling. The rules prescribe: "Be attentive and courteous to old people, little children, the weak and the sick; stand aside for them on the street, give them your seat, and help them in every way."

The effect of these rules was everywhere apparent. While punishment is provided for their violation, emphasis was rather on the encouragement of rewards, and especially of social approbation for adhering to them. Corporal punishment of any kind is taboo, as well as any sort of punishment that might do indirect physical harm, such as deprivation of meals.

The Soviet attitude toward discipline and the methods used deserve emphasis. The reality is so different from the impression of regimentation so widely held abroad. In the June 15, 1947, issue of *Bolshevik*, one of the most authoritative magazines setting forth the Communist viewpoint, I came across an article on Soviet schools by N. Yakovlev. Discussing the question of discipline, the author made the point that it must be of a conscious, voluntary type based on the individual's own understanding, and that discipline cannot be imposed from without. This, of course, stems from the basic concept that "freedom is the recognition of necessity," developed by Engels in *Anti-Dühring*. I saw the results of its

application in the freedom-within-discipline that characterized the behavior of the students in all the schools I visited.

Yakovlev went on to say, "One of the basic principles of the training of discipline in school must be exacting requirements but at the same time respect for the individuality of the pupil."

Punishment, he said, must be accepted as a method of teaching discipline, but must be applied carefully and wisely, and only after first trying more constructive methods. Resort to expulsion from school is only permissible if all other methods have failed. It was important that the school students' organization should participate in all problems of discipline, on a friendly, comradely basis.

In an article by N. E. Magarik, from *Sovietskaya Pedagogika*, No. 7, 1943, given me by Martianova to read, the author stressed the need for a strictly individual approach in all matters of punishment. He said that any form of punishment resulting in "suppression of will-power, the humiliation of human dignity, and the undermining of self-confidence" must be guarded against.

Every school, I found, maintains close connections with the parents. The teachers are required to visit the pupils at home and to be familiar with family conditions, which are usually at the root of personality problems. Parent courses keep parents up to date and lessen the gap between home and school training. The parents of each class meet and elect a president for the year. They help in the organization of afterschool activities, in arranging entertainments held jointly by the boys' and girls' schools. Each school has a Pedagogical Council made up of the teachers, parents' representatives, the school doctor, a representative of the Ministry of Education, and a representative of the patron (usually a factory), which looks after special needs in equipment, repairs, etc. The president of the Students' Council meets with them to take up special questions.

SPECIALIZED TRAINING

For those children who, at an early age, show artistic gifts, the larger cities have special schools. Moscow and Leningrad, where ballet leads the world, have had ballet schools since the eighteenth century. Now they exist in other large cities, along with schools for other types of artistic training. Some, for example the Conservatories of Music, have branches on collective farms.

I visited the Moscow Ballet School, founded in 1773, and a state school since 1803, which has continued its development under the Soviet government.

The director of the school, Nikolay Ivanovich Tarasov, assigned his assistant, Yury Alexeyevich Bakrushkin, now writing a history of the ballet, to show me around.

Bakrushkin told me that applicants must first undergo a physical examination to determine whether their heart and general physique can stand the exacting requirements. Next a jury of ballet teachers makes a preliminary selection; the final test is before a jury of the senior teachers. This year 65 had been selected out of 500 applicants. Of the 346 students in the school at the time of my visit, 70 per cent were girls. In ordinary times the proportion is about fifty-fifty. During the war there had been few older boys in the school, most of them having gone into military service; now the proportion was getting back to normal. The children were usually taken at the age of nine, although they were now taking in especially gifted children of twelve and thirteen. Often psychological changes at the age of fifteen or sixteen made it necessary for the pupils to give up ballet and choose another career. This happened more often in the case of boys.

Every effort is made to keep the lives of the pupils perfectly normal. No individual, of course, may exploit their talent. Beginning with the second year, the children may take part in performances of the Bolshoy Theater. This is usually done in groups and their hours are regulated to make up for any evening performances. The pupils spend the hours from 9 to 5 at the ballet school, having their main meals there, and their schedule is carefully divided between regular studies and ballet practice. During the summer they have complete rest from their ballet exercises.

I spent some time watching the girls of the oldest class, who looked like full-fledged ballerinas to me, although Bakrushkin apologized for them, explaining that they were all rusty after their summer vacations. The best dancer in this group was the daughter of an illiterate working woman; another was an army officer's daughter; a third came from the Negro* community in the Cau-

*Several hundred Negroes living in Soviet Abkhazia, who have their own local Soviet. They are mostly descendants of African slaves procured more than a century ago by Turkish landowners, when Sukhum, present capital of Abkhazia, was a slave-trading center.

casus. Five of the girls came from the Armenian Republic.

I also visited the preparatory school of the Moscow Conservatory of Music. This school had 450 students, many of whom were accepted as young as six. A little over a third were boys, again, as in the case of the ballet school, less than the normal number because of the war. While gifted young musicians were exempted from military service, many insisted on joining the army. Students from this school may go directly to the Conservatory, some entering in the second year. Children are also accepted at eleven or twelve, and come from different sections of the country. There are eleven such schools in the chief Soviet cities, as well as other types of special musical schools. The basic course is the same as in the regular schools, with special emphasis on music theory, harmony, etc. The three main divisions are violin, cello, and piano. The children are supplied with instruments by the school. They have their own orchestra, chorus, string ensemble, and so on, and, beginning with the third or fourth class, may participate in public concerts.

These specialized schools do not exhaust the opportunities for artistic education of children, but merely take care of those whose gifts are recognized at an early age. There are also many opportunities for artistic training in the after-school circles, the Pioneer Palaces and workers' and collective farm clubs.

A LABOR RESERVE SCHOOL

Opportunities for vocational education are wide and varied. There are the industrial trade schools with six to twelve month courses to train semi-skilled workers for the more common trades. Elementary vocational training is provided in the labor reserve schools (the trade and railway schools). These schools have a two to three year term and require an elementary education. Their students are on government stipend. Secondary vocational education may be acquired at the so-called "technicums"—industrial, agricultural, economic, pedagogical, medical, theatrical, art, music, and other schools. These are open to young men and women between the ages of fourteen and thirty, who have completed seven years of school. Finally, for those who have completed the regular ten-year course, there are specialized institutes in addition to the universities. In all these types of institu-

tions there is co-education, except in certain of the Labor Reserve schools.

First organized in 1940, the Labor Reserve schools have turned out 3,500,000 skilled workers. During the war years these schools had to cater to immediate war production needs, so they took in students and trained them in brief, intensive courses along rather narrowly specialized lines, sending them out to work as quickly as possible. The general educational program had to be sacrificed.

By the fall of 1945 most of these schools had already returned to their regular program. I visited Labor Reserve School No. 28 in Moscow, which trains workers for electric power stations and related industries.

A uniformed youngster smartly saluted us at the door and led us to the director, Sergey Agaltsev. When I asked whether the semi-military atmosphere was typical of the Labor Reserve system, the director explained that it was largely a wartime hang-over, but that, in the case of electrical workers, discipline was important in the training, since in working with high voltage lines, no carelessness could be permitted.

This school had five hundred students, of whom a hundred were girls, most of whom had entered during the war. This was to be the last graduating class of girls. The girls were specializing in the making of electrical measuring instruments. The students themselves make the instruments they use, and every student was equipped with a full set of tools. The first year was spent in study. In the second year they begin production practice in electric power stations, spending two days a week in studying, four in practical work. The division varies from time to time. Their curriculum includes, besides electrotechnics, mathematics, physics, Russian, history, study of the Constitution, current events, international affairs, military and physical training. The recreation circles included an orchestra, dancing, literature, singing. All the Labor Reserve schools have fine groups of amateur performers.

Agaltsev told us that while the law provides a draft of young people for the labor schools, they never had to apply its compulsory features, since volunteers had always made up the full quota.

"Some of our students," Agaltsev told me, "went to the Donbas to help restore the North Don Power Station. It was very

difficult work. Four of our students received medals of honor. Many are working in Moscow, in the evacuated industries now being re-established. They are also to be found in all the electrical departments of the Moscow subway."

While we were talking a student who appeared very young, but had a strangely adult face, came in. He had been with a guerrilla group for five years.

"How did you happen to decide to come here after your war experiences?" I asked him.

"I've always been interested in the life and laws of electricity, so I asked around where I could study about them, and found out about this school and here I am."

Boys who had lived such adventurous and independent existences during the war sometimes found it difficult to adapt themselves to school routine; however, in all cases, with wise and careful handling, they had been able to help these boys make adjustments. These schools had more difficult disciplinary problems than ordinary schools. Some of the students were boys from far-away districts who had never seen plumbing nor acquired table manners, and it was important that the rest of the students should do or say nothing to make them feel inferior. Both the Komsomol and the trade union organization helped. All the pupils are trade union members and not only are all their expenses paid, but they receive wages when they do production work.

Disciplinary methods included extra work, cleaning up, chopping wood, etc. Sometimes, in serious offenses, and only in extreme cases, a reprimand will be prepared by the director and read before the whole school.

"When even such a reprimand does no good," Agaltsev went on, "we have to take severer measures. We call a 'comradely court' in which the students take part.

"In general, we find the system of awards for good work more effective than punishment. For example, we have our own 'technicum' where the best students are sent. The students all want to go there, and they know too many black marks will exclude them. This is the best guarantee against misbehavior.

"When something goes wrong with a student, we don't censure him immediately, but first find out what is wrong and try to help him. Often all that happens is that I call a student in and have a talk with him. The students are not afraid of me. I

can't remember a single case when they didn't try to do what I asked of them. Sometimes I find that it is the teachers and not the students who are at fault, and I have to direct my attention to them.

"There is such a thing as being too strict, and I try to avoid that. I think I understand the nature of boys. We know that a certain amount of fooling around is necessary, to let off steam. We try to give as much freedom as possible in the ten minute intervals between classes. We don't interfere when they start shouting—only if some real disturbance gets under way. Whatever is normal we permit.

"Only when a pupil regularly breaks rules, is dirty and careless, neglectful of his work, and constantly picks fights with other boys do we take such serious measures as public censure. Sometimes we don't let him go to the movies or the theater with the rest—that helps. In cases where they live at home, we enlist the mother's help. As in the regular schools, the teachers are required to visit the homes of those who live with their families, and a detailed record is kept of home conditions." Agaltsev read me some samples from his notebook:

"Constantine Karlov: lives with mother, father, and four sisters, all older—23, 20, 19, 17—inclined to pick on him, which makes him rather sensitive. Father, watchman at factory, earns 400 rubles a month. Mother works at Red October plant, 375 rubles per month. Family has only three square meters of space per person. Constantine goes to cinema once a week. Difficult for him to study at home under crowded conditions."

"Ivan Stepanov—real mother dead, step-mother lives in village. Lives with father now working at factory. Family has sixteen square meters of living space. Can work at home."

"We have a record like this of every single student," Agaltsev explained. "So if a child comes to school unwashed, or with his lessons unprepared, first we try to find out whether he has the opportunity to keep clean at home, and has a place to study. We do not scold or punish him until we find out the reason and try to correct it. Of course the home conditions don't determine everything, but they play a big part. Psychological reasons as well as material ones have to be taken into consideration."

MATRICULATION EXAMS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

One of the measures introduced during the war for the improvement of educational methods was the "matriculation exam" at the end of the seven-year and ten-year course. The first examinations of this type were held at the end of the school year 1944-45. These exams followed the regular, end-of-the-year tests, and covered the whole preceding course of study.

I learned from a freshman of the History Faculty of Moscow University, Timofei Maslennikov, how these examinations were conducted. What follows is largely in his own words.

Our examination was based on what we had learned throughout our whole school life, but specifically the last three years—the eighth, ninth and tenth grades. In the course of our last year in school we had a series of examinations covering our work in the eighth and ninth grades, so we were pretty well prepared for the final examinations.

Our subjects were the Russian language, literature and math (algebra, geometry and trigonometry), history, physics, chemistry, and a foreign language. For the test itself, there are three examiners—the director of the school, a teacher in the given subject, and a representative from the district education commission. While the atmosphere is formal and dignified, the examiners do everything possible to make the student feel at ease. If the student isn't feeling well, or shows special nervousness, they may excuse him and give him a chance to come back again.

The first part of the test was written, and we had five hours to answer the question we chose. The questions are on slips of paper, from twenty to thirty such slips. You draw one, which gives you a choice of one of three questions. Our first examination covered the Russian language and literature, based on our studies in the tenth grade. I drew the following three themes:

(1) The moral greatness and spiritual beauty of the characters in Gorky's *Mother*; (2) The ballad of *Kniaz Igor* as a masterpiece of Russian literature. (3) Take any quotation from Pushkin's works and analyze it.

I chose the last, and took as my quotation: "My friend will dedicate to the fatherland the beautiful strivings of his soul." I found out later that most of the class had chosen Pushkin, and some quotation that had to do with patriotism, which was natural, as the war was still going on.

This first examination on literature is considered basic. If you get a bad mark you cannot continue with the rest of the exam. But you will have an opportunity to try again after more preparation.

They don't rush you; you get plenty of time to rest up between exams. Two or three days after the written exam comes the oral. The class is divided into two or three different groups. This time you draw three cards covering material studied in the eighth, ninth and tenth grades, and again you choose one of three questions on the card. You are given time to sit quietly and think out your answers, and make notes. The three questions I chose from my cards were the biography of Chekhov, a comparison of the characters of Napoleon and Kutuzov as described in literature, and an analysis of the characters of Griboyedov's *Wit Brings Woe*. In these oral exams you are supposed to bring out the main points in about twenty minutes. The examiners put questions to you as you go along, and they can also ask you to quote from other writers studied that year. They do not pay too much attention to small errors in detail, and do not try to trip you up, but are concerned to find out whether you know your subject and have the capacity to think things out on your own.

The second exam is math. First comes a five-hour written exam in algebra, based on material covered by the eighth, ninth and tenth classes. Two days later comes the oral algebra exam, also with questions drawn from all three grades, and problems to be solved quickly on the blackboard, with a time limit. The third exam covers geometry and trigonometry together, a five-hour written exam, with some difficult questions, followed by an oral in geometry, with theorems and problems to solve from the ninth and tenth classes, and an oral in trigonometry, with some theoretical problems.

"And what if you fail in any of these?" I asked at this point. "It didn't happen to anyone in our school," was Timofei's answer.

After math, come the history exams, all oral. These cover the history of Russia and the U.S.S.R. and other countries. You are given 20 to 25 minutes for each question. If the examiners see that you know your subject thoroughly they may stop you before your time is up. If you don't seem to know it too well, they keep on asking you questions to give you every possible chance. They

are not particularly interested in isolated dates, they stress the period—the relation of things that happened in a given period to the economic and social conditions of the time.

After that come the physics and the chemistry exams, all oral. The questions cover your general knowledge, definitions; they give you special problems to solve and experiments to perform.

In the foreign language exams, which come last, I had English. You are tested for a knowledge of vocabulary, rules of pronunciation, etc. You have to read and translate texts of average difficulty.

The exams begin on May 30 and end June 25. You have consultations with your teachers to help in preparing for them.

For those who get silver and gold medals no university entrance exams are required. There are competitive examinations for the remaining vacancies. You must have an average of three to compete. Say there are 200 places open in a given faculty. If there are 150 gold and silver “medalists,” that leaves 50 places open for competition. There were 300 applicants for our history faculty this year. Of these the fifty best were taken. Those rejected may try another institution, or take new exams the next semester.

I asked Timofei how the system of tuition fees and state stipends worked out.

In Moscow University the fee is 400 rubles a year—it is less in other schools. But actually there are not many who have to pay. Those who get excellent marks are exempt; also those who took part in the war, war invalids, children of Red Army men, orphans, and others. For those who need it, a room can be secured in the dormitory with meals free of charge. In addition, everyone making “good progress” gets a stipend, beginning at 250 rubles a month, and increased for the better students. There are also scholarships, and extra stipends for working as an “activist,” that is, taking on certain social obligations, like teaching in factory courses, helping in election campaigns, etc. The stipend increases as your work improves. It is possible for even the small group that have to pay tuition to cover it out of their stipends as long as they continue to show progress in their work. You can get your clothing at low prices through the trade union committees. I got a good pair of shoes for 20 rubles when even the ration price was several hundred rubles. The university has its own Sovkhoz (state farm) which supplies products to the restaurant. Each student spends two weeks a year working there.

Timofei was still glowing with the excitement of his two weeks on the farm that fall. The different faculties send out groups of several hundred at a time.

"Our group," said Timofei, "had to bring in the potato harvest. The girls dug, the boys loaded. We worked about ten hours a day. It was hard work, but we got into wonderful physical trim. We finished at seven or eight, had supper, and then talked about philosophy, love, literature, poetry—everything under the sun. I made some wonderful new friends—I wouldn't have missed it for anything!"

At my request Timofei described the courses he was taking as a freshman in the History Faculty. The Faculty is divided into the following six main departments: (1) History of the U.S.S.R. (subdivided into Pre-Revolutionary History, the Soviet period, and Marxism-Leninism). (2) General History, subdivided into the Ancient World, the Middle Ages, Modern and Contemporary History. (3) History of the Western World, subdivided into the different western countries. A new chair on Southern and Western Slavs had just been added. (4) History of the East—including China, India, Iran, and so on. (5) Ethnography. (6) Archeology, the study of anthropology being included in both the latter courses.

The course on the History of the U.S.S.R. and General History were combined the first year. Timofei himself had started with General History. His subjects included History of the U.S.S.R. (Ancient Russia), Ancient Greece and Rome, Primitive Society, Foundations of Marxism-Leninism, Foundations of Archeology, English, Latin and Physical Training. Lectures, three a day of two hours each, including twenty minutes or so for questions, were held four days a week. One day was devoted to military training (the wartime system was still in effect) and one to seminar work. Here they were divided into groups of fifteen. Working from original sources, at each session a student gave the main report, the teacher asked questions, and discussion followed. Language classes were held twice a week. In two and a half years Timofei would finish Latin, and take another Western European language. History students were required to take three languages in addition to their own, two of them Western European. The normal length of the history course was four and a half years, five years for ethnography and archeology, which included special field

work. The first two years consist of a rather general program, after which more specific and intensive study in the field chosen begins, and scientific research. Each student selects a "diploma project" in preparation for his degree. In professional fields these diploma projects include a period of practical work as well as theoretical study.

Timofei seemed surprised when I asked him how, in the midst of this heavy program, he found time for relaxation and fun.

"Don't worry! We have plenty of time to enjoy ourselves. We have dances, evenings of amateur art, the boys and girls have theater and concert dates; we go in for sports, skiing and skating in the winter, swimming, boating, tennis and other things in the summer."

I cannot here go into a description of the vast network of higher educational institutions, including those for general education and the specialized institutes. Before the Revolution there were 91 institutions of higher learning in Russia with only 112,000 students, among whom it was rare indeed to find young people from families of workers and peasants. Now the road to higher education is open to all who can qualify. Standards are high, but every opportunity is provided for students to attain them. The goal is, eventually, to make higher education universal.

Within four years after the October Revolution the number of students in higher schools had reached 272,000. But it was with the inauguration of the Third Five-Year Plan, at the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party in 1939, when the Soviet leaders, on the basis of the solid industrial foundation that had been built for the beginning of material well-being, decided on a tremendous expansion in the educational program. Viacheslav Molotov, then Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, announced, as the principal cultural aim of the new plan: "to make a great step forward toward realizing the historic task of raising the cultural level of the working class to engineers and technicians." Molotov further declared:

"Everything produced by capitalism and by the preceding history of mankind should be utilized and a new abode built out of the bricks created by the labor of the people in the course of many centuries—an abode suitable for the life of the people, spacious, full of life and sunshine."

The war, of course, set back the timetable for reaching this

bright goal, but the victory over fascism made secure its eventual realization. During my visit I learned that there were now more students in higher institutions of learning than before the war. In May, 1948, S. V. Kaftanov, Minister of Higher Education, reported that there were 800 higher educational institutions in the U.S.S.R., with a student body of over 700,000, distributed over the whole country and serving the peoples of every nationality, already exceeding the program set for 1950.

In order that national traditions and peculiarities may be fully respected, each union republic has its own Ministry of Education. There is no over-all U.S.S.R. Ministry of Education. In 1936 an All-Union Committee of Higher School Affairs was established to co-ordinate and direct higher education; in April, 1946, this was transformed into a Ministry of Higher Education of the U.S.S.R., which was made responsible for the scientific and methodological guidance of all higher educational institutions of the U.S.S.R. Institutes that train specialists are under the direct supervision of the respective ministries in their fields. Supervision of all lower educational institutions is under the competence of the separate republics, although all carry out a basically unified program.

Post-graduate work is open to those who wish it. Jobs are guaranteed to every graduate. About six months before graduation, the students may apply to a state commission in charge of placement, and negotiate with representatives of the different ministries. The commission strives to satisfy both the personal desires of the students and the requirements for specialists of the ministry concerned. There is no compulsory allocation of jobs, although special inducements are offered for jobs in out-of-the-way sections of the country.

Outside the regular school system and the extra-curricular activities connected with it, there are many educational institutions for developing creative abilities and initiative. These include Pioneer Palaces, young naturalists' and technicians' stations, children's clubs and libraries, children's parks and sport grounds, children's theaters, and so on. There are similar centers for adult education. The measures through which the whole Soviet people can continue their education at all levels and widen their cultural horizons are so numerous that it would take another book to describe them.

Everywhere in the Soviet Union, one finds youth in the forefront, and the best that the country has is lavished on them. Among the youth the Komsomols are in the leadership, setting the example of courage in time of war, of heroic labor in time of peace.

Mikhailov, general secretary of the Komsomol organization, spoke with pride of the thousands of Komsomol members who had been decorated for wartime exploits, of the contribution made to the front even by school children, and the inspiration this had been to the men at the front.

"You have heard the old saying 'man to man is a wolf,' " he said. "This has been completely discredited by our young people. You know what the ration was in Leningrad at the height of the siege —125 grams of bread a day. Many were too weak to collect their ration. The Komsomols were as weak and hungry as everyone else. Yet they organized special brigades and went out and collected the rations for those people, carried their water, heated their stoves. The fact that there was not a single instance when a Komsomol took even a crumb of this bread is as much a cause of pride to us as the courage of our young people at the front and in the ranks of the guerrillas.

"Everywhere our young people are volunteering to help in the restoration work just as they volunteered to go to the most dangerous places during the war. Hundreds of thousands have gone to Stalingrad, Leningrad, Dnieproges, wherever the biggest restoration jobs have to be done, and they have had to live under incredibly difficult conditions."

Mikhailov told me of special problems in the former occupied regions where the young people had been fed Goebbels propaganda all during the war. This propaganda had not been without some effect, since these young people were cut off from all contact with Soviet life and their normal educational progress was at a standstill. So now the problem was to teach these young people again the elementary facts of Soviet life. Thousands of young people were in the Ukraine and other formerly occupied regions to help in this human reclamation, which had to go on side by side with the material reconstruction. These brigades of young people spent several months in one district re-establishing newspapers, libraries, clubs and then went on to the next district.

Mikhailov spoke, too, of the high moral standards of the

Soviet young people, their ideal of the family as the highest of human relations.

Discussions along these lines are published in the pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the leading youth paper. In the spring of 1948, this paper carried a page devoted to questions of parent-child relationships (quoted in the *Moscow News*, May 14, 1948).

A letter from members of the Komsomol in Stalingrad said: "The Young Communist League stands for a lofty, beautiful and pure love between our young people. We stand for a healthy, solid, happy family.

"Respect for parents, loving care for the people of the older generation who fought for the better life we are enjoying—these are the qualities which every Soviet young man or woman must have. Respect for the human being in general is the law of socialist society."

The same note was sounded in a letter from a Komsomol group in the Ukraine:

"Respect for Man, the feeling of socialist humanism, are inalienable characteristics of our morals."

CHAPTER X

SOVIET TRADE UNIONS

The charge is frequently made that Soviet trade unions are not free and democratic and are government-controlled. It would be nearer the truth to say that they control the government, although that is not accurate either, since every organization of the Soviet people is represented in the government and can express its will and secure attention to its members' needs. But the trade unions, embracing 27,000,000 members, are the basic people's organization in a socialist state which recognizes, according to Article 3 of the Soviet Constitution, that "all power belongs to the working people of town and country as represented by the Soviets of Working People's Deputies." Consider, too, that most of the deputies to the Supreme Soviet are trade union members. Kalinin's successor as chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, a position often described as President of the U.S.S.R., is Nikolai Shvernik, formerly head of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, (A.U.C.C.T.U.), while Kuznetsov, present head of the Soviet unions, is chairman of the Council of Nationalities, the second chamber of the Supreme Soviet.

My husband and I saw this influence exerted in day-to-day activity both in the immense and humming Palace of Labor in Moscow, which houses A.U.C.C.T.U., and in every factory and institution we visited.

What especially interested us in our visits to A.U.C.C.T.U. were not only its close contacts with the whole country—delegations were constantly going out from the main office, and delegations from remote areas coming in—but its close association with every department of government. We were constantly bump-

ing into representatives from the various ministries. When we remarked on this to one of the trade union officials, he explained: "Hardly any government department or ministry starts anything without consulting the trade unions, since we are in such close touch with the people all over the country."

A.U.C.C.T.U. headquarters is the general staff of the trade union movement. It has the following departments: wages, organization, labor protection and safety, social insurance, rest homes and sanatoria, hospitals, culture and education, physical culture and sports, publications, housing, living conditions and welfare work, legal, international, statistics, personnel and office management. In addition the building houses the central offices of some of its 168 affiliated unions.

The industrial form of union organization prevails everywhere; membership takes in everyone from the least skilled workers to management. The large number of separate unions is due to the many new industries being developed and the immensity of the country, which has made it expedient to divide some of the unions on regional lines.

The right of Soviet workers to organize is guaranteed by the Soviet Constitution. Membership is voluntary. About 85 per cent of the nation's wage earners and salaried workers belong. Those who do not, for the most part, have recently entered industry. There is no such thing as an "unorganized" shop or factory in the Soviet Union.

Structurally each trade union is based on a "group" of up to twenty workers. Each "group" elects its organizer and labor protection and social insurance delegates. The "group" is kept small so that the organizer, who roughly corresponds to the shop steward in our country, may maintain the closest possible contact with all the members. In smaller enterprises the next higher body above the "group" is the factory committee, elected annually by all the workers. In larger plants there are intermediate department committees, similarly elected. The factory committee elects a chairman, the only full-time paid functionary in small and medium-sized plants; in larger plants he may have several paid assistants. Some union locals have no intermediate bodies between the factory committee and the national organization; others elect regional committees and officers and some elect committees for each of the sixteen Union Republics.

The highest governing body of each trade union is its biennial convention, to which delegates are elected by the workers in each factory. The convention elects the union central committee. All the unions are federated in the A.U.C.C.T.U. Regular union conventions were not held during the war years because of travel difficulties, but regional conferences took their place. Regular conventions have since been resumed.

Each trade union organization in a factory or department elects committees on wages, labor protection, social insurance, education and canteen. Each factory organization has, in addition, committees on housing and supplies, inventions and rationalization, child welfare and families of servicemen. The national trade unions have similar departments staffed by full-time workers.

The funds of the Soviet trade unions are derived exclusively from dues payments amounting to one per cent of wages or salaries. There are no initiation fees.

HOW LABOR LAWS ARE MADE

National legislation affecting labor cannot be promulgated without the participation of the trade unions. The U.S.S.R. has a more detailed and comprehensive labor code than any other country. It covers many matters that in the United States are the subject of collective bargaining—hours of work, overtime rates, restrictions on woman and child labor, provisions for paid vacations and holidays, rules for the temporary transfer of workers to other job classifications, pay for waiting time and so on. Detailed safety and sanitation regulations are specified for each industry with the requirement that management provide and pay for all safety clothing and equipment.

We asked the chairman of the Steel Workers' Union for the Central Region whether unionists felt that this highly detailed labor code was more satisfactory than leaving many of the matters with which it deals to collective bargaining. He replied that in earlier years many conditions now covered by law were included in the collective agreements. However, because the trade unions have so large a part in formulating labor law, they found two advantages in establishing standards in this way rather than by contract. Where every demand upon management becomes a subject for bargaining, the final compromise agreement usually

falls short of the workers' demand. The Soviet experience has been that the unions get more from their government by way of law, than from management by way of a contract. (Collective agreements, however, are of importance in covering varying conditions in different plants.)

Moreover, he pointed out, violations of a collective agreement only give rise to a grievance, enforceable through regular collective bargaining channels. A violation of the labor law, on the other hand, is punishable as a criminal offense. Therefore, the law commands stricter adherence by management.

Labor laws applicable to a particular industry are issued by its ministry. Law of general application, like those dealing with hours of work and overtime pay, are promulgated by the Council of Ministers.

The trade unions have the right to propose new and amended laws to the ministers, a right of which they constantly avail themselves; and laws proposed on the initiative of the ministers cannot become effective until after submission to and full consultation with the trade unions concerned.

Trade unions not only share in making the labor laws, but have full power to enforce them. The government has designated them as its agent for this purpose. In addition to the regular labor protection committees and delegates in every factory, the unions employ a staff of full-time inspectors to check on fulfillment of all labor regulations, provision of required safety devices, proper working clothes, etc. Every person employed in a supervisory capacity, from foreman to factory director, is required to make periodic reports on his compliance with labor laws to trade union meetings, where he must also face criticism.

If management does not correct a violation, the inspector has a right to impose a fine of 500 rubles on the responsible representative of management. If not paid, it can be collected by court action. Representatives of management guilty of violations also forfeit the production bonuses which make up a large part of their income, or receive severer penalties through court action.

In 1947, collective bargaining, suspended during the war, was resumed, and more than 25,000 collective agreements were concluded in that year. The agreements dealt with fulfillment of production plans, organization of work, maintenance and improvement of workers' standards, obligations of management to provide

workers with adequate housing, food, social and cultural facilities and on-the-job training, as well as application of wage norms and rates. The draft agreements are gone over with minute care at general shop meetings, every worker having an opportunity to make criticisms and suggestions. About 90 per cent of the 14,000,000 workers affected attended these meetings in 1947. Of 700,000 proposals made by workers, 200,000 were incorporated in the agreements. In addition to day-to-day checking up on fulfillment by the trade unions, there is a mass check-up every three months, the results of which are brought before meetings of workers. An over-all check-up of the fulfillment of the past year's agreements preceded the conclusion of new agreements in 1948.

One of the questions members of the C.I.O. delegation were constantly asking, because of the repeated allegations in America that strikes are prohibited by Soviet law, was why there were no strikes in the Soviet Union. Always the answer came back: "Does it really seem a good thing to you when workers must strike?" The fact of the matter is that the union has the right, specifically authorized by Soviet law, to call a work stoppage if necessary to secure compliance by management.

That this right is seldom exercised is due to the fact that private profit having been abolished, management's principal incentive for resisting labor's demands has been removed. There is complete identity of interest between management and labor in maintaining maximum and uninterrupted production. Further, any Soviet factory director who permitted grievances to go unadjusted to the point where a strike became necessary would probably be removed from his post under trade union pressure. And, finally, the trade unions have machinery which they have found fully satisfactory for the settlement of their grievances and the satisfaction of their demands.

While strike action is rare, it is by no means unknown. In the newspaper *Trud* of April, 1946, a case was reported of a factory director who had persistently stalled on a trade union demand for a proper ventilating system and other safety measures. The union set March 25 as a deadline and warned that failure would lead to a stoppage. When the director ignored the warning, the trade union ordered a stoppage. The *Trud* article not only castigated the plant director but also criticized the trade union officials for not moving more promptly and decisively to protect the workers.

The group organizer has initial responsibility for handling grievances. If he fails to reach a satisfactory adjustment with his foreman, the matter passes to the trade union committee of the department and the department head. If no agreement is reached at this level, it passes to the union's factory committee and management. If the matter cannot be settled there, it goes to the rates and conflicts commission, made up of an equal number of representatives of the trade union and of management, which has jurisdiction over all disputes except those involving violation of labor law. The trade union can enforce the commission's decision through the courts if management fails to comply. If a worker is dissatisfied with the commission's ruling, he has the right to appeal to the national executive board of his union. Management has similar right of appeal. In no case can the decision of the commission be reversed except by the union's national executive board.

If labor and management are unable to agree, the case may be taken to the people's court for final disposition, or, as often happens, the workers may prefer to appeal to the national executive board of their union, which takes the matter up with the appropriate ministry. In almost all cases where disputes reach the highest instance, decisions are in favor of the union.

HOW THE WAGE SYSTEM WORKS

The national wage budget is established by the Council of Ministers and A.U.C.C.T.U. in connection with the five-year plan production goals, which the trade unions share in developing every step of the way. The wage fund and prices are fixed to yield to the Soviet people the purchasing power to buy the consumers' goods and services they will produce under the plan, plus a surplus for savings. The total fund is then apportioned among the various branches of industry and trade.

The next step is the establishment of the general wage scales for a given industry which is done jointly by the central committee of the union concerned and the ministry for the given branch of industry.

From eight to twelve categories are established, depending on the nature of the industry. These are graduated according to skill and range from unskilled labor to the highest skills. A "rate

schedule" is agreed upon by the ministry and the union which sets a base hourly rate for each labor grade. This varies from industry to industry. In the machine building industry, for example, the rate for unskilled labor (grade one) was eight rubles a day, while the rate for skilled workers (grade eight) was twenty-eight and one-half rubles a day, or 3.6 times higher. Base rates are subject to re-examination and review on the request of the union or the ministry and are periodically revised in collective bargaining. (The wage rates given are for 1945; they have risen since.)

The factory union local and the management prepare their own job classifications. Thus the application of the wage scale within a particular enterprise becomes a matter for collective bargaining. Many different factors enter into job classification—the nature of the work as well as the degree of skill, and the extent of mechanization. Thus a fitter, though a skilled worker and well paid, would receive less than a forgerman because the former is "cold, light work," the latter "hot, heavy work."

Length of the vacation is also a matter for negotiation between the unions and the management, heavier or more hazardous work bringing longer paid vacations, and an extension of time if health considerations make it desirable. The proposed classifications are circulated to the trade union committees of each department for discussion and reviewed by the workers before their final adoption.

Earnings are not limited by the base rates in the schedule. In accordance with the constitutional principle that payment for labor shall correspond both with its quality and quantity, the majority of workers are paid on a piece-rate system. Where the nature of their work makes this possible, some other incentive is used.

Social recognition of good work is a very important factor. In every factory, score boards posting daily production records are followed with avid interest. Foremost workers have their pictures in the wall newspaper or on the bulletin board. Laggards sometimes find their names beside the symbol of a sloth. "Challenge Banners" for the highest production are zealously competed for between department and department, factory and factory.

The hourly earnings specified in the rate schedules form the base rates on which incentive earnings are computed. They also are the guaranteed minimum to which workers are entitled irre-

spective of output. The base rate for a particular job, divided by the production norm, determines the initial piece rate. The piece rate is progressive, rising as set production levels are exceeded.

Thus, suppose a miner is paid four rubles per ton for the first eight tons he mines. For the ninth and tenth tons he is paid eight rubles per ton. And for production in excess of ten tons, the rate is tripled.

In addition to incentive wages, bonuses and other prizes are awarded to all who exceed their quotas. Soviet emphasis on incentive wages makes the establishment of production norms a task of key importance. They are constantly reviewed, the workers themselves participating at all stages. At the Stalin Automobile Plant in Moscow, when norms were revised in 1944, more than 11,000 workers participated in the discussion and made over 6,000 suggestions either for changing the norms or for improved methods of work.

Comparisons of wages and living standards of Soviet and American workers are difficult, since translations of rubles into dollars are meaningless, and it is hard to estimate the value of the free medical care, rent reductions, and other "social" wages. So many fantastic statements have been made, however, about the supposed enormous differential between workers and management that I would like to quote a comparison my husband worked out on this point:

"The salaries of representatives of management, like the wages of workers, are based upon the principle of greater rewards for higher skills and increased productivity. Every member of management, from foreman to plant director, including engineering and technical employees, is paid a fixed base salary, and given the opportunity to earn premium payments depending upon the performance of the department or enterprise which he directs. Management is responsible not only for the quantity of production but for production costs. Premium payments to management personnel are made for overfulfillment of the plan in each of these respects.

"Premium payments, however, must not be at the expense of working conditions in the plant. The trade unions, in addition to imposing other penalties for an infraction of the labor laws, may deprive those responsible for the violation of the right to receive their bonuses.

"As an example of the compensation of top level management, take the case of the director of a large steel mill with a base salary of 3,000 rubles a month. He is entitled to a one hundred per cent premium, or an additional 3,000 rubles, if the plant's production exceeds the plan by five per cent; and a further 3,000 rubles if the plan is surpassed by ten per cent. In addition, he is paid a bonus of 1,000 rubles a month if he succeeds in reducing planned production costs during any semi-annual period. Thus the maximum salary of the director, if he earned *all* premiums, would be 10,000 rubles a month, or 120,000 rubles a year.

"This salary may be compared to the earnings of Soviet steel workers. Typically, these range from 7,200-9,600 rubles a year for common labor to 24,000-30,000 rubles for melters, the most highly skilled workers in the mill. Average annual earnings of all workers in the mill approximate 10,800 rubles (1945 figures).

"For an American comparison of the spread between the earnings of the workers and the salaries (plus bonuses) of top management, we may again turn to the steel industry. The average earnings of the steel workers today approximate \$2,300 annually.

"This compares with salary and bonus payments (excluding dividends on stock ownership) ranging from \$149,760 to \$221,645 for the four top executives of Bethlehem Steel Company; from \$133,000 to \$275,000 for the three leading officers of Republic Steel Company; and from \$110,356 to \$162,256 for the three top officers of United States Steel.

"Thus in the U.S., top management gets about one hundred times as much as the average worker (counting salary only), in the U.S.S.R. only ten times as much."

THE SOCIAL INSURANCE SYSTEM

The Social Insurance Department of the A.U.C.C.T.U. administers the vast social insurance program, the most comprehensive in the world. Literally every hazard to life, health, or economic security, from the cradle to the grave, is covered without cost to the worker, either by social insurance as such or by some other form of protection. The social insurance fund for 1944-45 amounted to 10,100,000,000 rubles. In 1948 it was 15,700,000,000 rubles. A percentage of its total wage fund is contributed for social insurance by each industry, varying in different cases. Thus in the

chemical industry it is 10.7 per cent; in textiles 9.3 per cent; and in the theater 3.7 per cent. Why was it so much lower in the last case? The answer was terse: "Less illness, higher wages, better conditions of work, fewer babies."

The only kind of social insurance lacking in the U.S.S.R. is unemployment insurance. Since 1930 there has been no unemployment in the Soviet Union. Protection in cases of so-called "frictional" unemployment, from the time when a worker is notified of a lay-off until he secures another job, is provided by the labor law. A worker may be discharged only for incompetence or in the event of a reduction in the labor force. In both cases, he must be given two weeks' notice or two weeks' pay. This is ample time for him to find other employment under the prevailing labor shortage. He is free to choose his own type of employment, labor mobilization having applied only during the war years.

Every worker receives complete, free medical care through a widespread network of clinics, hospitals, specialized medical institutions, rest homes and sanatoria. Every worker is attached to a clinic where constant supervision is kept over the state of his health.

In small factories a worker is usually served by the district polyclinic. (These exist everywhere, giving free medical service to the general population.) The big factories have their own polyclinic. If the worker is too sick to attend the clinic, the doctor visits him at home. The doctor decides whether the worker be sent to a hospital or sanitarium, or can be left in care of someone in the family. The same medical care is provided for his wife and dependents.

We were struck with the careful provision for individual attention. The social insurance delegate of the lowest trade union group must visit the ill worker, see what he needs and check up on whether he is getting proper attention. If the invalid has no family, the social insurance delegate has someone sent in to prepare food, clean up, wait on him as long as he needs it.

Factory polyclinics vary in staff and equipment with the size of the plant. Everywhere we heard the comment: "You should have seen what we had before the war." For all of them had parted with precious equipment, first for the front, and, after victory, for the occupied areas stripped by the enemy.

Before the war, millions of workers were sent to fine sanatoria

and rest homes. Many of these were destroyed by the Germans, others had been temporarily converted into army hospitals. To make up for the loss of such facilities, during the war special sanatoria were established right at the plants. This system will be continued and the "night sanatoria," common before the war, will be reopened. Workers needing special treatment and diet, although able to continue their work, go to these sanatoria at night instead of going home, and are given a special regimen for a two-week period or longer according to need.

Wages are paid all during illness, beginning from the first day of work lost and lasting as long as the worker must stay away. The percentage of wages received during illness depends on the number of years in the factory and ranges from 50 per cent for any period up to two years to 100 per cent for six years and over. The rate is higher for young workers. If a worker has changed his work not by his own will, the years at the previous factory are counted. For example, if a wife changes her job because her husband has taken a job in another place, she is credited with the number of years she has spent in her previous place of work. Time spent in the army is counted as working time. Every contingency is considered in administering the law. Actually, we were told, more than half of all ailing workers received 80 to 100 per cent of their wages.

While all medical and hospital care, including food at the hospital or polyclinic, is free, there is now a slight charge for medicines. It was found that when medicines were entirely free there was a tendency to wastage.

All the provisions described also apply to non-union members, except that the wage payment during illness is only half of what union members received.

Pensions are of three kinds; for invalids, for old age, and for families that lose their provider. Invalids are divided into groups according to the extent of incapacitation, the percentage of former wages received graded accordingly. Old-age pensions are due to men of sixty who have worked twenty-five years, and to women of fifty-five after twenty years of work. The period of work is decreased for hazardous occupations. All old people in the country are included in some sort of pension arrangements. If invalidism is directly attributable to occupational causes, pensions are given irrespective of the number of years worked.

Aside from the trade union social insurance provisions, everyone in the country is covered by some form of social security. Collective farmers have their own mutual insurance system. All others come under the government Social Security Ministry.

The magnificent program of child care with its nursery schools and kindergartens, financed by the Ministry of Health and by industry, with a charge to the parents of only a small fraction of the actual cost, is one of the few aspects of Soviet life widely and accurately reported in America. Aid to mothers has been constantly extended. Not only do mothers receive the maternity vacation of thirty-five days before and from forty-two to fifty-six days after childbirth, with constant medical supervision and help, but they receive layettes for their babies, extra rations during the nursing period, and progressively higher sums of money for the support of every additional child, beginning with the third.

"There can be no refusal to take care of the children of working mothers in our creches and kindergartens," we were told. "During the war we used everything we could—stores were transformed into kindergartens, temporary buildings were put up, and about twice as many children as before were accommodated."

During the war the trade unions looked after the families of Red Army men. War orphans were their special charge, and after the war they looked after the needs of the demobilized.

In addition to the paid full-time workers employed by the unions to administer the social insurance program, about a million workers participate as volunteers.

HOUSING AND LIVING CONDITIONS

The Department of Housing and Living Conditions of A.U.C.C.T.U. is run by Maria Kurkina, a gentle, motherly woman, an old-time textile worker.

"There was a period when the main emphasis in our country had to be on industrial construction and production," said Kurkina, "and housing took second place. Now housing is on the same level as industrial development. During the war we had to put war needs first and the workers simply lived where they could. The problem was particularly difficult in the devastated regions."

The new tendency, she told us, was to avoid large apartment houses. New ones ran to three stories, with two or three apart-

ments to a floor, separate kitchen and bath facilities for every family, and plenty of garden space.

The construction of individual homes by workers is encouraged. Entire workers' villages of individual homes have been built. Land is provided gratis, and interest-free loans of ten to twenty thousand rubles may be secured for up to a ten-year period. The industry helps provide the building materials and organizes building brigades to help put the houses up, but the worker must provide thirty per cent of the labor. Factory Committees also help secure materials, plant trees, and provide livestock at low rates.

"During the war," Kurkina said, "we often had to resort to barracks in the new industries. Unfortunately we still have to build some, but whereas we used to have huge one-room barracks, now we are trying to limit them to rooms for four to eight people. During the new five-year plan we shall give them up altogether."

Kurkina told me of a visit she had recently made to a machine-building plant in the Urals, inaugurating a project of individual home building. First a meeting was held to inform all workers of the conditions under which they could build; 180 workers applied. It was decided to make a start with thirty houses, preference being given to returned Red Army men, those who had worked the longest in the factory, and cases of special need. The management set up a special department to prepare building materials, organized training courses and set up workshops for the making of details—window frames, doors and even furniture. The union organizers called their groups together, and asked for volunteers to help fellow-workers in their spare time. Kurkina showed me a letter from one of the newly housed workers:

"For seventeen years I have worked at this plant. My two sons work here, too. There is hardly a machine in the whole place we have not tended. Now the factory has rewarded me with a new home. Before, I lived with my wife and children in one room—it was large, but we were crowded. Now we have four rooms, a kitchen, a veranda, a bath, our own yard. My two sons and I put a lot of work into building the house. But without the help of my comrades, the house would not have been built to this day. The fitter, Nikolayev, came every day after work for seventeen days. The chairman of our department trade union committee organized a brigade and for three days they worked six hours. Many others helped. Now we are planting potatoes and vegetables.

Through the factory committee I got a calf and some chickens. Our family looks forward to a good, happy life!"

Not everywhere, Kurkina explained, had the building of individual homes been organized as efficiently as in this particular factory. Sometimes there were delays in getting materials, sometimes the management did not provide sufficient help.

I asked Kurkina what the present tendency was in providing communal facilities and help with housekeeping for women workers.

"Little could be provided in the way of communal services during the war. Right now I am negotiating with the Commissariat of Finance for a bigger budget expressly for this purpose."

Every enterprise, she said, has its own restaurant, where both men and women workers get their main meal, while the children are usually fed their noonday meal in the kindergartens and schools, some factories having special restaurants for the workers' children.

"But most of our women," she said, "want a good kitchen in their homes in order to prepare the family breakfast and supper. Therefore every apartment should have facilities for cooking at home—good stoves, ice boxes—some day we hope to have frigidaire like yours.

"We formerly had many public laundries, but during the war we could not spare the equipment, fuel and workers for them. Now we are re-establishing them—both large mechanized laundries and hand laundries where the women may do their own things. We are considering the question of public cleaning arrangements to help women with their housework, vacuum-cleaning service, and so on."

At an A.U.C.C.T.U. conference which I attended, devoted especially to the improvement of workers' living conditions, I heard a hot discussion on housing. The heads of government ministries responsible for housing came in for a terrific barrage of criticism from the trade union representatives.

A.U.C.C.T.U. chairman V. V. Kuznetsov outlined measures taken to improve housing and living conditions, and shortcomings in carrying out the program on the part of both government and trade unions. Local trade union representatives reported on conditions in their districts. Representatives of government ministries reported to the trade unions on what had been done and acknowledged delays. The trade unionists present were not at all satisfied

with the reports, expressing themselves freely on shortcomings.

The presence of foreigners did not in the least inhibit complaints. Government officials were criticized in the fullest and frankest terms for delays, poor quality, faulty plumbing, incomplete equipment, etc.

Nor did the trade unionists escape criticism. They were enjoined by their leaders to insist that managers speed up the program, and that their commissions to inspect workers' housing not tolerate faulty work.

FOOD AND CLOTHING

One of the busiest departments in A.U.C.C.T.U. was Workers' Supply. As food became scarcer during the war with the loss of the chief food-growing regions, the trade unions in 1942 set up special supply departments in all plants of 1,000 or more to supplement the ration.

War conditions required that the workers in heavy industries and those doing the heaviest work in each industry have the largest rations. The government put at the disposal of all industries large plots of land for cultivation and many large state and livestock farms, fully equipped, to provide additional sources of supply over the basic ration.

As a result, in mining and metallurgy, workers in the "hot and heavy" category received 1,100, instead of their basic ration of 1,000 grams of bread a day; 800, instead of 500 grams of sugar or sweets a month; 19,500, instead of 4,500 grams of meat or fish; 5,800, instead of 1,000 grams of fats per month; 13,500, instead of 3,000 grams of cereals monthly; 48,000, instead of 12,000 grams of potatoes monthly. Workers on lower rations received comparable increases from these supplementary sources.

There were supplementary rations for the sick, especially the tubercular, and for pregnant women from the sixth month on. Special attention was given to workers in science, literature, and art, who received supplementary meals, double rations of fat and sugar.

Practically all workers drew a large part of their rations in a form in which they could take it home to share with their families. This personal division of rations among families largely equalized the original differential in rations.

In addition to the farms run by the factories, stress had been laid all through the war years on individual gardens. In 1945, 18,000,000 out of 27,000,000 trade union members were growing food. The A.U.C.C.T.U. and the local unions were backing this movement energetically, furnishing seed and garden tools, and publishing thousands of pamphlets and posters with gardening instructions.

While the regular ration was available to everyone in special closed shops at low prices, within everyone's capacity to pay, there was also a system of government-controlled commercial shops where additional food could be bought. While prices in these shops were very high, this made additions to the diets available. The trade union organization found ways of helping anyone in need through its mutual aid funds. At the end of the war, prices in the commercial shops were progressively lowered. Wage increases helped to stabilize workers' purchasing power.

With the abolition of rationing at the end of 1947, prices, already greatly reduced since the war, were drastically lowered in food, clothing, and all consumers' goods and made uniform. This, in conjunction with the ruble reform, appreciably increased real wages. At the same time, hundreds of new shops were opened, and increased supplies of all kinds became available.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The cultural work of A.U.C.C.T.U. to which about 25 per cent of the budget is allotted, is headed by a woman, Elena Shulga.

When we interviewed Shulga, she had recently returned from a trip through the devastated regions. A warm, vital woman, friendly and jolly, she was still deeply wrought up over the horrors she had seen. She had been working in the Donets Basin when the war came, and had been evacuated from Stalino when the Germans were only a few miles away. She had gone back there just a few hours after the liberation. Bodies were still hanging from balconies and lamp posts. Dead mothers lay in the street with babies impaled on their breasts. In those days, Shulga's job was to help restore the factory trade union organizations. It was a question of finding a worker to put in charge of the ruins. Now that preliminary reconstruction had been done, it was her responsibility to restore cultural activities to peacetime levels.

Before the war there had been 6,000 trade union clubs and palaces of culture throughout the country. At the time of my visit, there were only 3,000—a measure of the terrific destruction of cultural institutions in the occupied regions. Many clubs had been taken over for additional production space during the war, others had been transformed into hospitals or nurseries.

Factories which had been unable to build regular club houses were required to set "Red Corners" aside for cultural work. The 100,000 that existed before the war had been cut to about a third. They were being "reconverted" to cultural use.

The clubs and Red Corners arrange lectures and organize circles of all kinds—choral, drama, ballet, music, art, sewing and embroidery, photography, radio—whatever the workers are interested in. In addition professionals from local theaters come to the factory to perform. "Vecheras" (evening parties) are held, some just for fun, with dancing and games, others to discuss production problems and exchange experience. Most of the clubs have technical exhibits and give lectures to increase the workers' skill.

The clubs are run by a paid director, sometimes with a paid assistant. Often there are paid professional people in charge of the circles, but the work is largely done by volunteers.

There is no membership fee for these clubs, and all workers, whether trade union members or not, and their families, share their facilities. The only charge is sometimes for movies and special performances. The trade unions make block purchases of tickets to professional theatrical and musical performances, giving them away where necessary.

The amateur groups provide recreation for themselves and the other workers, and further training to those who want to develop their musical or dramatic talents.

In 1945 a national competitive review of the work of these amateur circles took place, reviving a pre-war annual affair. Over 10,000 choruses, with 200,000 singers and 9,000 soloists took part. The competition begins with local festivals. Winners participate in a city or county concert; the next competition is at the republic capital, and the finalists compete in Moscow.

"These festivals," Shulga told me, "are attended by 'talent scouts' who often find new stars for our theaters and operas. Many are sent to dramatic and ballet schools and conservatories. One of

this year's finds was Laguta, a nineteen-year old salesgirl from the Ukraine. She didn't know a note before she joined the trade union chorus. Now she is in the Conservatory at Kiev. A woman chauffeur from Kolomna, a fitter from one of our machine building factories, and a fisherwoman from the Karelo-Finnish Republic, will also go to the conservatory."

Every factory has facilities for showing motion pictures. If large enough auditoriums and fixtures are lacking, movable projectors are set up in smaller halls. Before the war there were 11,700 cinema houses or "bases." German depredations had reduced them to 3,500, but they were rapidly being re-established.

A.U.C.C.T.U. has its own broadcasting station which serves enterprises far from the center. Many large enterprises broadcast their own radio programs.

"We had many trade union libraries before the war," Shulga told us. "Over 8,000 of these libraries had more than a thousand books—we don't even count the thousands of smaller collections. Altogether in our big trade union libraries we had 50,000,000 books. The Nazis destroyed 20,000,000.

"Paid librarians are in charge of each library. Each enterprise also has a special readers' council, a voluntary group which selects new books, arranges literary evenings, draws up recommended reading lists."

A special section of Shulga's department supervises educational work, which includes help for the "FZO"—schools started during the war for young people who entered industry. The educational program in these schools is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The trade unions provide quarters, equipment, and fuel. The young people attending these schools are not permitted any overtime work. The schools work in two shifts of four hours each, so that every student attends every other evening four nights a week, and has alternate evenings for study. In the spring, students have a month off, with pay, to prepare for exams.

So little illiteracy remains in the Soviet Union that the trade unions no longer need do extensive work in this field. There is no illiteracy among the young. For some workers over fifty who are wholly or partially illiterate, special courses are arranged by the union.

Language study is popular in the trade unions, with English the favorite. Russian and general courses are also popular. Many

workers who show writing ability get training on their local shop newspapers, or as "worker correspondents" for large newspapers.

The trade unions run summer camps for workers' children. In 1940, 1,169,000 children were accommodated. In 1948, the number was about 2,500,000. Most of the money for this work comes from the social insurance fund, the trade unions providing additional funds when necessary.

During the war, so many women went to work in industry that many children returned to empty homes after school. Trade union committees set up special rooms in workers' clubs, or in the apartment house itself, with a responsible person in charge. The children came there from school, returning home only when some adult would be there, too. Visits to theaters, movies, museums, etc. were arranged. This helped to keep juvenile delinquency at a minimum.

A separate department looks after war orphans. More than eighty children's homes, taking care of over 5,000 children, had been organized. The Ministry of Education looks after their education and provides the teachers; the trade unions do the rest.

The trade unions have organized "forest schools" for tubercular and weak children. They also contribute to the support of the kindergartens. Only the day nurseries, which come under the Ministry of Health, are not their responsibility, although they often help them, too.

Every Christmas and New Year, in the great House of Trade Unions in Moscow, the A.U.C.C.T.U. holds a "Yolka" (Christmas Tree) celebration which goes on for a week or more. Similar celebrations are held under trade union auspices throughout the country.

One of my most joyous experiences in Moscow was my visit to the House of Trade Unions during "Children's Book Week." Children from all over Moscow poured into the great hall, which was lined with book exhibits. On the stage, scenes from their favorite books were performed, fairy tales, bits of opera. Their favorite authors were there in person to speak, recite their new poetry, tell their new stories.

Still another responsibility of the Cultural Department was equipment for the trade union clubs—pianos and other musical instruments, silks and velvets for curtains and costumes. Since everything they had before the war was worn out, and the textile

industry had to produce for the army, this was a problem. "But we fight it out with Gosplan" [State Planning Board], said Shulga, "get whatever we can, and distribute the materials where they are most needed."

Shulga was proud of being the first woman to head this department. She had attended one of the meetings of the World Federation of Trade Unions in Paris and she couldn't understand why there were no women in the C.I.O. delegation there.

TRADE UNIONS AND SPORTS

A large part of the immense physical culture and sports program of the Soviet Union is carried on through the trade unions. Beletsky, head of the A.U.C.C.T.U. "Physcult" department told us that over seventy of the chief sports societies of the U.S.S.R. with their stadiums, gymnasiums, tennis courts, ski runs, and other facilities were run by the unions, and that there were about 7,000 local sport clubs. Leading industries have their own sport societies, such as the famous "Torpedo" society of the automobile workers. Only three big sport societies are not run by the unions: "Dynamo" of the Red Army, "Spartak" of the Co-operatives, and the sport society of the labor reserve schools.

Football (soccer) and skiing are the most popular sports among Soviet workers. Two games as yet almost unknown are football, as it is played in America, and baseball.

Before the war, the membership of trade union sports societies numbered 1,800,000. The war had thinned their ranks, but in the fall of 1945 they had again reached the million mark. About half the members are women.

Membership is open not only to workers, but to their families as well. The fee is a ruble a month, 50 kopeks a month for students. The trade unions supply instructors and coaches, and all equipment except sports clothes. Members of touring teams have all their expenses paid by the society and receive their regular wages. The considerable income from sports events goes into the trade union welfare fund.

Two special events organized by the trade unions are the annual summer cross-country runs in which seven or eight millions take part, and the winter ski runs, in which six million or more take part.

Chess comes under the category of sport, and every factory has its chess teams. Botvinnik, Soviet chess champion, winner of the world championship in 1948, started as a worker in a power station. He is now an official in the Ministry of Hydroelectric Stations.

Beletsky told us that yachting was popular among the workers, who have their own yacht clubs, and go in for races and long cruises.

THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT

A department of the A.U.C.C.T.U. in which my husband, as a lawyer, was especially interested, was its legal section. This is headed by I. S. Drovnikov, who has an assistant and a staff of eight lawyers. With two important exceptions my husband found, in a discussion with Drovnikov, that the work of the A.U.C.C.T.U. legal department does not differ greatly from that of counsel for an American trade union. The Soviet labor lawyer is not required to spend any part of his time defending the existence of the trade union he represents or its right to organize and bargain collectively. On the other hand the Soviet labor lawyer has a function not regularly performed by his American counterpart—that of giving legal advice and representation to individual trade union members.

For this purpose, the A.U.C.C.T.U. legal department supervises the work of a corps of trade union law consultants in each of the large cities furnishing free legal service to trade union members. In Moscow, for example, the A.U.C.C.T.U. employs seventeen lawyers, assisted by more than a hundred volunteers, practicing lawyers who spend part of their time doing this work.

The consultants give free legal aid to all trade union members on every type of personal legal problem. This includes criminal as well as civil matters unless the consultant feels that the worker is not deserving of assistance, in which case he is left to retain an attorney himself.

The legal staff of the A.U.C.C.T.U. is consulted in matters relating to labor laws and regulations.

Another duty of the legal department is to advise on the interpretation and application of existing labor laws and regulations, serving both the A.U.C.C.T.U. as a whole, and those trade unions

which do not have their own counsel. It is constantly called upon by factory trade union officials in disputes regarding labor law enforcement, imposition of fines on management, or stopping an unguarded or faulty machine from running. It also provides professional advice on social insurance claims.

Finally, the legal department helps to explain Soviet labor laws and regulations to the workers. When an important new law is adopted, conferences are called at which it is explained and discussed. Manuals, handbooks, and popular pamphlets are prepared, covering its application. Extensive use is made of the extensive trade union press for the same purpose.

The A.U.C.C.T.U. publishing department has its own press which publishes millions of pamphlets, books, and magazines covering every phase of union work. Now they were publishing novels of special interest to the workers. By 1945 they had issued 75 titles in editions totaling 3,700,000. A special postwar project was the publication of elementary material of all kinds for use in the occupied regions cut off from Soviet life for more than four years.

IN AN AUTO WORKER'S HOME

While we were making the rounds at the Stalin Auto Plant in Moscow, we ran into Sergei Davidov, a skilled tool and dye maker. Overjoyed at the chance to meet someone from America, he invited us to his home, where my husband and I spent an evening with him.

He lived in a comfortable three-room apartment with a big kitchen. He was luckier than many Moscow workers who lived under much more crowded conditions. With him lived his wife, and his eight-year old daughter, Liudmilla, a flower-like little creature, with dimples and bright eyes. He had just brought his mother-in-law to live with them. As he showed us around the apartment, Sergei pointed to the ikon corner. "I'm not a religious man myself," he said, "but let the old lady have her ikons if she wants them!"

The first part of the evening was Liudmilla's. She had just started school and had to tell us all about it. She was getting "fours" and "fives" (the highest marks). Afternoons she attended dancing circle. She was sweet and shy, and yet completely unselfconscious. She brought in her favorite doll and other precious

possessions to show us. When bedtime came, she begged to stay up because "the foreign aunt and uncle are talking so interestingly," but finally went off without much pressure.

Over the samovar, we learned that Sergei had worked in the auto plant for twenty years. He had lost his parents in World War I, and had spent five years in an orphans' home. From there he had gone to the trade school of the auto plant and, after three years of study and apprenticeship, became a full-fledged worker. Continuing his vocational training while on the job, he was promoted to more highly skilled work, finally becoming a foreman.

He had not gone to the front, because he had had tuberculosis before the war, and his skill was needed in the factory. They kept him on a short working day and sent him periodically to a sanitarium.

The Davidovs had a little dacha in the woods outside of Moscow and Sergei had just taken his family there the day before when, on June 22, 1941, the war shattered their happiness.

During the defense of Stalingrad, for designing special tools, simplifying operations and cutting spoilage to a minimum, he was awarded the Order of the Red Star. For designing and perfecting other tools that helped raise the munitions output, he received a Stalin prize. He brought out the scroll to show us.

"We admire American technique very much," he said, "but in the care of the human being, we think our country is at the top. As for Stalin, we love him, that's all—he's our own. That's why this scroll signed by him means so much to me. Do Americans understand how much we Soviet people love our country? Everything in it is near and dear to us. Take me to some little town near Moscow—or anywhere else in our whole wide country. I can go into any village, maybe it's a thousand miles from here, but it's still my native land. I can tell you where the fish are in the streams, and how to catch them—that's Russia. Every stone of our country is dear to us."

Mrs. Davidov was not working now, because her husband liked to come home and find his wife already there and everything in order. His opinion was that in the future not so many women would work outside the home.

"There is no need for it. Anyway, our government wants us to have children, because so many people were killed. I like children running around. We had a fourteen-year-old son, who died

before the war. We wanted another son—the war interfered with that, too. But now maybe we can have more children. One daughter is not enough. She'll get married and go away, and we will be alone."

The wife saw things differently. She wanted to go back to work again. The housework in the new apartment was not enough to keep her busy. Her mother helped her.

"What is there for me to do?" she said, "I get up and get breakfast in the morning, then I clean up the apartment. My husband has his main meal in the factory. Then my little girl comes home for dinner. Sometimes I go to the movies, sometimes I embroider—but still it isn't enough."

This household was not at all typical in this respect, especially since Sergei was a party member, although his wife was not. Most men in the Soviet Union have long since abandoned any idea that it is the wife's business to stay at home and look after them. This particular situation was undoubtedly explained by the fact that Davidov was physically frail. But Mrs. Davidov, while she would have preferred to work, obviously did not have a resentful attitude and felt that her husband had worked so hard during the war he had earned a little pampering.

When we finally broke away, they embraced us like old and beloved friends, and begged us to come and see them again.

After my return to America I read that the workers of the Stalin Auto Plant had nominated Sergei Davidov to the Supreme Soviet of the R.S.F.S.R. in 1947, and that he had been elected.

CHAPTER XI

A MONTH ON A SOVIET FREIGHTER

Back in Moscow, I found that no return passage via Europe by air or sea could be had for months. Anna Louise Strong, scheduled for a lecture tour in America, was in the same plight. We joined forces, and secured accommodations on the Soviet freighter *Minsk*, sailing from Poti. The flight from Moscow to Tbilisi took us across the magnificent Caucasus range where it dips into the Black Sea. Thence by rail, through the land of the Golden Fleece, we came to Poti. Its harbor was ringed with slate-black piles of manganese from the famous Chiaturi mines nearby, at one of which our ship was loading. As we picked our way around it to go on board, friendly faces smiled at us over the railing. Instead of the simple and even rough conditions I had expected, we had roomy, airy cabins, comfortably equipped and spotless.

The cabins were in the forward part of the ship, and my port-hole opened out on the tall mast with its graceful rigging and the prow. We were on the officers' deck, which was glassed in in front, with four cabins on each side; the dining saloon in the center served as the social hall.

Children of crew members were dashing all over the ship, giving it a homey atmosphere. At dinner we ate with the officers, engineers and radio operators. The captain, Dmitri Spiridonovich Sariev, came in to welcome us and to apologize for being too busy to dine with us.

At this first meal we made the acquaintance of the ship's physician, Dr. Artiukh, a woman with a handsome, intelligent face, radiating joy and excitement. She had just had word that her husband whom she had thought dead for four years—his ship had been

sunk in the Baltic—was alive and was on his way home. Captain Sariev had made arrangements for her to be replaced, and there would be a slight delay in our departure as no Soviet ship can sail without a physician aboard.

We quickly became acquainted with our shipmates. The blond first mate, Ivan Kut, was a large calm man, serious and dignified. His broad, kind face, his poised, attentive manner, inspired confidence. Black-haired Pavel Yudin, second mate, was dark, disturbed and gloomy looking, and no wonder; his was the responsibility of loading the manganese, a tricky cargo. Konstantin Ivanov, Kostya to everyone, was the youngest of the lot, gay and dashing, affecting sideburns, forever making jokes. First engineer Evgeni Titov was a pleasant, friendly fellow, and an accomplished piano player. Second engineer Alexander Dovzhenok was, for a time, only a voice we heard in the pantry; he hesitated to join us at table in his oily clothes. Third engineer Bzhitsky, young, fair and good looking, was the captain's favorite chess partner. First radio engineer Valentine Velikanov was a dark, sensitive, intellectual type. His assistant, Vassily Bashevnik, who, like Bzhitsky, had worked up from the job of stoker, had a good, plain worker's face. I kept thinking of them as "typical Slavs"—but the description "typical American" would fit just as well. You would see the same faces on the American waterfront or on an American college campus.

Officers and crew numbered sixty-one, five of them women. Besides Dr. Paulina Tarasova who replaced Dr. Artiukh, the others were Lida Kommissarova, affectionately called Lidochka, our stewardess; Valya Yeremayeva, the captain's "cabin boy"; Marusia Aplionka, kitchen assistant; and the glamorous Marusia Petukhova, who wore her golden hair in a snood, and waited on table for the crew.

Captain Sariev, an Armenian, was dark, bald, and heavy-jawed, with a strong yet gentle face. Handsome and dignified in his full uniform, aboardship he dressed informally and wore a funny little cap that made him look like a mischievous school boy.

He told us some of the things he liked about Americans.

"From your forefathers who went out to seek new land," he said, "you inherited a bold, adventurous, pioneering spirit—we like that—and no country in the world can equal America in technical achievements. Something else you have that is very important is

a sense of the value of time. We haven't got that yet. And you do things on a big scale and we like that, too. The landing in North Africa, the landing in Sicily, the opening of the Second Front. ('Our time sense wasn't so good on that,' I remarked.) All these things were well prepared, down to the last detail, and on a tremendous scale."

In our cultural life he found less to praise. He agreed we had some fine American writers. He challenged me on music. "Have you any great composers?" he asked, "any to match Tchaikowsky, Glinka, Borodin, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian?" A great music lover, his favorites were Tchaikowsky, Beethoven and Glinka, some of Rimsky-Korsakoff, Bach in certain moods, and he could listen endlessly to Strauss waltzes. He preferred Shostakovich to Prokofiev, but regretted that no one today compares with the old masters.

At seven on Christmas Eve the *Minsk* turned toward the open sea doing eleven knots an hour with hardly a vibration. At five o'clock, our first day out, we were invited to a trade union meeting in the mess hall. The crew were all there in neat blue denim suits. Dovzhenok, second engineer, whom we now saw for the first time, was elected chairman.

Captain Sariev spoke of the proud war record of the *Minsk*, plying between San Francisco and Seattle and Vladivostok, bringing lend-lease goods to the U.S.S.R.

There was loud applause when he said, "This is the first Soviet freighter to sail from a Black Sea Port for our friendly ally, America, in peacetime. Continuing the co-operation which meant so much during the war, we are carrying an important cargo to America, and will bring back machines to help restore our ruined industries."

He outlined the tasks before the crew. First, their socialist obligations to fulfill and over-fulfill their plan; second, preparations for the coming elections. The young people aboard who had not voted before must be made acquainted with their rights and duties as citizens; third, it was the duty of the more experienced members of the crew to help train the new workers and apprentices to be first-rate seamen.

Three times, said second engineer Dovzhenok, had their ship won the challenge Red Banner for its war work; premiums of 40,000 rubles had been distributed among the crew's best work-

ers, nine of whom had been decorated. Their task now was as important to their country as their wartime service.

Next on the agenda came "socialist obligations." The chairman called for proposals from the floor. At first no one said anything. The chairman said: "Perhaps, comrades, you are bashful because we have guests present, but you should not be. They are Americans, they are our friends. Don't hesitate to speak your minds before them." Then the following proposals were made:

To economize 3 percent in the use of coal; 10 percent in the use of oil; 3 percent in wiping materials; one ton waste oil to be saved; to keep the steam up to 15 pounds; to keep the entire mechanism of the ship in constant repair; to keep the speed constantly at eleven knots an hour; to maintain cleanliness; to return to Odessa with all machinery in perfect condition; to train two machinists, first class; two stokers, first class; and one machinist, third class (any crew member could volunteer for this); to maintain labor discipline; to undertake individual socialist competition agreements; to keep the ship steady on its course; to economize in the use of electricity.

The members of the crew soon spoke up without embarrassment. There was considerable discussion and finally, with some modifications, the proposals were accepted. The captain voted along with the crew.

Dovzhenok asked for further discussion. A stoker remarked that the cooking was lousy, and was greeted by a chorus of agreement.

As we went upstairs the captain invited us to his quarters. Valya was waiting for us at the door, explaining that the captain had been called up to the bridge.

On the table was a huge Christmas turkey, sparkling wine glasses, plates heaped high with tangerines and pomegranates. Valya told us the captain had planned this as soon as he heard Americans were coming aboard (the Russians celebrate New Year's instead of Christmas) and Poti had been scoured for the turkey.

Presently the captain came in and explained that an SOS signal had been received. It had been traced to the Bosphorus, so there was nothing we could do. Twice in the last few months they had helped rescue crews of ships that had hit mines. The Black Sea was still full of them.

After the third vodka, I remarked that, for the first time, I

seemed to be aware of some motion and asked the captain whether it was the ship or the vodka.

"It's the ship. We're rolling a bit because I have just changed the course." He then told us he had just had instructions to make a stop at Odessa—Anna Louise and I looked at each other aghast fearing this would mean another week's delay.

The talk turned to books—the captain was a voracious reader. His favorite authors of old Russia are Chekhov, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy; his modern favorites are Gorky, Alexey Tolstoy, Sholokhov, and Nikolai Sobolev, the latter beloved by all the sailors for his tales of the sea. He had read Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain, O. Henry, Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Erskine Caldwell. The conversation got around to Voyetekhov's *Last Days of Sevastopol*; Captain Sariev, it turned out, had taken part in the defense of Sevastopol among other Black Sea battles.

The third day of the war, heading for Odessa, his unarmed ship encountered eighteen bombers. On the right was the Crimean shore, on the left, mined waters. With only a narrow belt where he could maneuver, his only protection from the bombs was to go forward and back.

"I am a very lucky man," he said, "all the bombs fell in the water. For months after that we carried ammunition and supplies to Sevastopol. We were attacked by bombs and torpedoes day and night. But I was always lucky. Once when I was on the bridge, my cabin was hit. Another time, just as I had left the bridge, a shower of splinters fell there. At one time in the Kerch operation eleven torpedoes circled us, but none of them hit."

The first ship that went down under him struck a magnetic mine. "My officers and I remained on the bridge, but were later picked up from the water. I had ordered all the others to the lifeboats. The ship went down in thirteen and a half minutes, but we saved everyone. The second time we struck a mine, the ship split in two and went down in a minute and a half. The German planes came over and machine-gunned us. I lost ten of my men."

Captain Sariev was only thirty-nine years old. He told us that when his beard grows it is completely white. He showed us a photograph of his lovely young wife. Their home is in Odessa, where she is musical program director on the radio.

All next day those of the officers and crew who lived in Odessa were making plans to meet their families.

This was the second time the *Minsk* had been pulled back. A few weeks before they had set out from a Bulgarian port for Lisbon to pick up a load of cork. In the Bosphorus they were instructed to turn back to Poti to load manganese instead.

I remarked that cork must guarantee against sinking.

"It's the most dangerous cargo of all," said Second Mate Yudin, the gloomy one. "It's full of poisonous snakes. Once when we were carrying cork I woke up with a snake in my bunk."

Kostya reached up and started swinging a bell cord. At my look of surprise he explained: "We hear a lot of tall tales on this boat. Once when someone was telling one, the cord started swinging—so now we call it our 'lie detector'."

The captain remained on the bridge during supper. "That means these waters are dangerous," said Anna Louise. She picked up the information that a cutter would guide us between the minefields in the Odessa waters.

It was cold and dark and windy—and with all the talk of mines, I went to bed a bit uneasily. About five o'clock a commotion woke me up. I looked out and saw a boat alongside, light flooding the deck, people scurrying around. I assumed this was the convoy cutter. I went back to sleep. When the breakfast bell rang, I dressed for a visit to Odessa. Only the second radio man, Bakchevnik, was sitting at the table.

"How soon Odessa?" I asked.

"Odessa?" said he, "we'll soon be in Istanbul."

We had reached a point forty-two miles from Odessa, done our business there with the boat I had seen in the morning, and were now on our way to America!

Anna Louise and I expected everyone to be upset at having missed seeing their families, but they took it philosophically. "It's a sailor's life," they said.

Velikanov told us he had taken part in the defense of Sevastopol, and had had two ships sunk under him in the Black Sea. The first time, only he and his wife were saved because they were in the radio room on the top deck. Wounded the second time, he was transferred to shore duty. He was in Novorossisk a few days after its liberation.

"I could not have believed the Germans or any human beings capable of being such beasts," he said. "In Novorossisk we found an old woman, one of the six survivors. She took us to see the

people murdered by the Germans. They were lying in a great pit—old men and women and hundreds of children, with their heads crushed.”

Over the radio next morning, we heard part of the communique of the Moscow foreign ministers’ meeting, reporting the decision to refer the question of atomic energy to a commission of the United Nations.

First Mate Kut asked soberly: “Why is your country so secretive about the atom bomb? This is something we should work out together. Think of it, just a hundred atom bombs, and this whole planet could be shattered to bits—this beautiful world into which humanity has put so much labor.”

The seriousness with which the crew took their “socialist obligations” impressed us. The deck installations were being painted like mad. In the mileage reports, every tenth of a per cent delay or progress was noted. The cooking was consistently better after the meeting.

Entering the Bosphorus we saw on either side great nets set out for a dreadful kind of fish—the mines coming in from the Black Sea. We had a view of Istanbul through rain and fog. Bright colored boats drawn up on the shore, exotic architecture, graceful minarets, St. Sophia’s looming out of the mist, boats from the U.S.S.R., America, Greece, and other nations in the harbor, gulls circling over the gray waters.

Passing through the Dardanelles, the calm waters gleamed blue and silver, the hills were inky blue against the pale sky. Fish broke the smooth surface of the water with lovely curving lines.

The shores on both sides were very close. More than half the shipping that goes through here is Soviet, since over 80 per cent of the U.S.S.R.’s seaborne trade takes this route. Anna Louise expressed indignation that this strategic spot is left in control of the Turks whose “neutrality” let German and Italian ships pass through during the war. “Why should my country not have the security and convenience of a base here,” remarked the captain, “when the Mediterranean is ringed with the bases of Britain and other countries? I always have a bottled-up feeling coming through here.”

When we mentioned that the New Year was the day after tomorrow, Ivanov said: “What’s new about it? Just sea and sea and sea. New Year’s a time for parties and dancing . . .” Then he

remembered that it would be his watch at that time. "It will be me, Ivanov, who leads the *Minsk* right into the New Year," he boasted.

This led to talk about how we would see the New Year in. Ivanov said something about a "dry law" on board. Anna Louise asked were they really forbidden to drink?

"Yes," said Ivanov, "everything but tea, kerosene, and ink."

"And on New Year's?" pursued Anna Louise.

"Oh, then we can drink anything except tea, kerosene, and ink!"

Lida appeared with a kerchief around her chubby, dimpled face. She usually wore a little white dingus on top of her head.

"Our Lidochka changes her headgear as often as a Chekhov heroine," remarked Velikanov, always ready with a literary allusion, and as Lida leaned pensively over the radio twirling the knobs, he added, "What a picture—'Dreaming at Twilight'."

"No—'I'm Waiting for You'," said Ivanov, "look how Lida's eyes flash blue sparks when she looks at you."

"That's Yessenin," jeered Velikanov, "not Ivanov."

"That shows how much you know," shot back Kostya. "It's original Ivanov. Yessenin put it differently:

*What are you goggling at
With those blue sparks of eyes?
Do you want a black eye?
You're only fit for a scarecrow
And you won't leave men in peace.*

And what Yessenin wrote certainly doesn't apply to our Lidochka—except maybe that last line."

"Just the same, you wouldn't have thought up 'blue sparks' all by yourself," insisted Velikanov.

"You're wrong," said Ivanov, "if he hadn't written it, I would have thought of it anyway. Stop! Stop!"—shielding his eyes in mock terror as Lida kept on flashing blue sparks at him—"My mama won't let me!"

I asked Lida how she had happened to go to sea. "I grew up in Archangel," she said, "and there were ships there from all over the world. I always loved them from the time I was a little girl. My mother and father wouldn't let me go to sea, and sent me to a medical technicum instead, but I couldn't forget the sea. At sixteen I ran away from home." She has traveled to England, to

the West Coast, and along the northern coast of Europe and Asia. She has done every kind of job on a ship, including stoking.

Her mother is president of a large kolkhoz in the Arctic region; her father a tankist in the Red Army.

In the autumn of 1942, Lida was traveling in convoy in the Barents Sea. Their freighter, fallen behind, was attacked by torpedo-carrying planes. Lida was asleep when the torpedo struck.

"I am a very sound sleeper," she said. "The first thing I knew I was thrown out of my berth as the ship was turning over. I rushed out on deck. Everybody had gone. I was all alone. I grabbed a lifebelt, and jumped into the sea just as the boat turned over. I screamed and screamed. Meantime the captain had started counting the people in the lifeboats and suddenly said, 'Where's Lida?' They came back for me. I was in the water twenty-five minutes."

The radio brought the news that America's W. Averell Harriman and Britain's Clark Kerr were setting off to Romania to advise King Michael who should be included in the government. The captain recalled the Atlantic Charter provision about non-interference in the affairs of other nations. "Why," he said, "is it non-interference for the British to shoot down Greek patriots and Indonesians, but something quite else when our government supports anti-fascist forces in the Balkan countries?"

We heard the first news of Theodore Dreiser's death in a tribute to him that came over the Moscow radio. The Russians were as saddened as Anna Louise and I. Most of them knew his books. Velikanov had read *Sister Carrie*, *The American Tragedy*, *The Genius*, *The Financier*, and *The Titan*.

One morning Titov took me for a visit to his engine room. The *Minsk*, built in Germany in 1919, was purchased by the Soviet government in 1932. Its main engine is 6,000 horse power. All around were subsidiary engines. Titov showed me the main dynamo. "It's both old and old-fashioned," said he. "But it's reliable enough." Next to it was an American anti-magnetic mine device, which he assured me guaranteed safety at least against one type of mine.

We went down into the bowels of the ship, where the stokers work. They grinned at me cheerfully. Their faces and bare torsos were black with coal and shining with sweat.

Soviet labor regulations provide that the stokers who feed coal

directly to the furnaces work four hours and have twelve hours off. During the war it was four hours on, eight hours off, the norm for other countries. They were trying to get back to their norm but there was a labor shortage in the merchant marine as everywhere.

During the war Titov was on a Soviet-owned Liberty ship carrying lumber to England and military supplies back to Archangel, and saw plenty of bombing. He liked the Liberty ship because it had a fine engine and good comfortable quarters and used oil instead of coal, eliminating the dirty stoking job. He hoped the *Minsk* might be converted into an oil burner.

"I was a stoker myself," he told me. "In our country, you know, you cannot be an engineer unless you worked as a stoker and have been through all that has to be done to keep the engines going. You go to a Marine Technicum (Technical High School) for two years. After two years of practical work you get your fourth engineer's diploma; you serve two years as fourth engineer before you can be third, and so on up."

The same thing can be achieved in self-study courses, but the standards are high, the examinations strict, and the requirements for practical work stringent. There are also institutes for training marine engineers.

At twenty-seven Titov himself, an institute graduate, was the youngest chief mechanic in the fleet. Ordinarily institute graduates take land jobs. Titov scorned "shore mariners." "We have too many people in offices, too many people doing paper work. When we come ashore they simply torment us; they are on our necks all the time."

On New Year's day we had dinner with the whole crew in the regular mess hall. The captain offered the first toast:

"Comrades, the crew of the *Minsk* is entering upon a new year. The past year marked the victory of our country and its Allies over the fascist aggressors. The New Year, too, will be important in the life of our country. There will be our elections on February tenth. Our fourth Five-Year Plan will begin, a plan for restoration of everything the enemy destroyed, of new building, of raising the living standards of our people. The crew of the *Minsk* has done its part well in the past, and I know it will continue to in the future. Our ship was on the New Year's roll of honor just broadcast from Odessa. Here's to our crew!"

Anna Louise, speaking for us both in her fluent, if somewhat

original, Russian, thanked the seamen for all they had done in our common cause. Her toast to the lasting friendship of our countries brought warm response.

Gifts were ceremoniously presented, a cigarette holder for me, a picture frame for Anna Louise, both beautifully fashioned by Shuprin, ship mechanic, on his lathe. After dinner there was singing in the Red Corner, and we played dominoes for a while with the captain and first mate Kut.

The captain, a little sadly, began talking about his wife again. In six years he has only had one night at home. When the Black Sea battles were over, he was transferred to Far Eastern waters and his wife went to Vladivostok to be with him during a brief shore leave. Last December 31, he got home at eight o'clock in the evening. At twelve, came an order to take over a ship the next morning. When he was transferred back to the Black Sea his wife moved back to Odessa and in October, when his ship was in port, they had eight days together. Eight days and four hours in the whole year! Normally, he would have a month's vacation plus twenty-four days every year.

His thirteen-year-old son was in school in Odessa.

"What does your son want to be when he grows up?" I asked.

"A sailor, like his dad—but I tell him to choose anything in the world but that . . ."

"But you wouldn't choose anything else for yourself, would you?"

"Certainly not—it's in my bones. I can't spend more than a week on shore without getting fidgety. They offered me a job in Moscow, in our Merchant Marine Commissariat, but I wouldn't take it. Too much paper work. Here at sea I have everything. All the air I want, the sun, the stars, every kind of weather—it's all mine. I meet interesting people wherever I go; I see the whole world."

He likes people with the same quality of expansiveness he loves in the sea—Gorky, for example. He met Gorky once when his ship docked at Capri. "I knew his work well," he told me. "And when I met him, I found him such a simple person that I felt I had known him for a thousand years. He invited me to his house with my crew. When we arrived he called to his housekeeper, 'Hurry, bring the vodka, the sailors are here!'

"You meet a great man, and you feel that you will be embar-

pressed and stiff and wonder what you will say. But when you meet Gorky you feel as if you were talking to a brother. I never talked so freely to anyone. He seemed to understand everything in your mind and heart."

In shipboard conversations we were asked endless questions about American politics. What was Secretary Byrnes' background? Is Truman a rich man? Who will be the next President? Why don't they lower prices? Why don't they use the war factories to make other kinds of goods? Do American Indians have full civil rights? How does it happen there is still prejudice against Negroes in the north which went to war to free them? Why aren't there any good theaters outside of New York? What are American seamen paid?

Anna Louise had picked up disquieting information about delays. At Gibraltar we would take on 1,500 tons of coal, a two-weeks' supply for the run to New York, with enough margin for maybe an extra week. She asked what would happen if we ran out of coal in the middle of the ocean.

"Oh," said Titov, "we'd just throw all the scraps we could find lying around, mix them up with paint—it contains coal tar you know and it's pretty expensive fuel, but we'd manage somehow."

"Did you ever try that?" asked Anna Louise.

"Certainly," said Titov.

Ivanov started swinging the bell rope.

"This is a true story," insisted Titov. "Once before the war we were coming back from England and needed 200 tons of coal. We got instructions from the home office to take on only 50 tons. We radioed back that this wasn't enough, so they answered that the ship *Budyenny* would meet us in the Baltic and give us whatever additional coal we needed. We got hold of 100 tons and in the Baltic, sure enough, it gave out. But no sign of the *Budyenny*."

"So we threw in all the scraps mixed up with paint. We got a real fire going and worked up a lot of steam. We had to pull the stokers out every few minutes so they wouldn't die of the fumes, and everything on the ship was covered with two inches of soot. We smoked up the whole Baltic. We managed to keep going for about a day until we ran out of paint. Then we just sat there in the middle of the Baltic radioing our position, hoping someone would come and pick us up. After a while the icebreaker *Litke*

showed up. But she is a little low thing, and we were riding high. There was no way the coal could be transferred, so she just towed us into port."

Ivanov recalled a voyage to Singapore on a ship fitted up for the north. They landed in winter outfits, and everybody stared at them. Most ships on this trip take on Arabs at Port Said to do their stoking, but being a Soviet ship they didn't like to do this. They were shocked by the British treatment of these Arab laborers.

"In general," said Ivanov, "I prefer the Americans to the British. They are friendly, helpful, open, direct. If an American finds a green worker doing something awkward, he pitches in and shows him how to do it. An Englishman just stands there with his nose in the air and his hands in his pockets."

I told him about a conversation I had had with a British architect in the Savoy Restaurant in Moscow.

The architect who had come "out" (as the British always say, implying that the Soviet Union is an outlandish sort of place to come to) to look over the buildings occupied by the British diplomats was complaining about the state of the world.

"It's really dreadful now that there's no one country to take things in hand and rule the world," he had said. "Of course, that was England's job, and if we hadn't made that foolish blunder of letting America get away from us we should have been in a position to do so. Well, we lost our chance. But if there's no one else it would certainly have been better to have Hitler."

A shadow fell across Ivanov's impish face. "Won't they ever let us rest?" he said despairingly.

One night a passing British ship queried who we were. The captain radioed back that our name was *Minsk*, and wished them "happy sailing." No answer. "Wouldn't a ship usually answer such a message?" we asked the captain. "Yes," he said, "that would be only common politeness in our sailor's code."

We saw the glow of the Malta light as we passed between that island and Sicily. The Island of Elba was not far away. The captain had visited Elba and seen the house where Napoleon lived in exile. Outside was a stunted oak tree, its roots and branches encircling the house. "As I looked at it," he said, "I couldn't help thinking of it as a symbol of Napoleon himself, the little man with powerful arms who tried to encircle the whole world."

At breakfast we noticed that Dr. Tarasova was looking dole-

ful. She nodded when I asked her if she was grieving for the *Karl Marx*, the ship from which she had been transferred. "What was so interesting about the *Karl Marx*?" I pursued.

"Probably she left her things there," said Ivanov. "Her heart for example."

We said maybe the *Karl Marx* would catch up with us at Gibraltar.

"That ship will never get to Gibraltar," jibed Ivanov. "It's an old thing that would simply fall to pieces if it tried to go that far. Its bow would fall off in the Bosphorus, its masts in the Dardanelles, the stern would fall apart in the Mediterranean, and all that would sail into Gibraltar would be the propellor,"—he made an expressive swimming gesture with his hands—"with the doctor's heart sitting in the middle of it!"

The sea was crowded with ships from many nations. We noted that although the *Minsk* and other Soviet freighters, as well as those of other nations, had removed their guns, the British ships were still armed.

Anna Louise asked Ivanov: "Will we make better time on the Atlantic after we bunker in Gibraltar?"

"And how!" he said. "We'll get Cardiff coal at Gibraltar—we've got Bulgarian coal now, crumbly, dusty stuff which doesn't cake up in the furnaces. The stokers have to fool around with it all the time; the fine dust clogs the pipes and slows us down. But Cardiff coal! The stokers shove it in the furnace, close the door, go to sleep for half an hour, come back, look in, everything O.K., back to sleep again. The *Minsk* will fly like a bird when she gets some of that in her belly."

I asked Ivanov if he'd seen any mines on his watch.

"No," he said, "I've seen enough mines and torpedoes and bombs. I'd like to look at something else for a change. Too bad we can't stop off at Port Said and have a look at the pyramids and the Sphinx. I like things that have history behind them. I wish I'd been born three hundred years ago. Then there were still places to discover. You came out of a fog and you didn't know where you were. Now there are sextants and all kinds of other instruments and you always know where you are. It's dull."

I said maybe after a while it would be better—there'd be more people in the crew, not so much work, more time for dancing and singing.

"No, that's not the point. It's the way the world is today that bothers me. What are people thinking about? Still atom bombs—things to destroy. I read an article by one of our scientists who invented a new type of machine gun during the war. He wanted to make other kinds of things, to make life richer. Now he'll still have to go on thinking about machine guns. If everyone else is working on atom bombs, our scientists have to also, instead of on the wonderful things that could be done with atomic energy."

In my wanderings around the lower deck, I had run into two pigs ambling around, fondly dubbed "Vaska" and "Masha" by the crew. One morning I heard some blood-curdling squeals and rushing out I saw Masha laid out on a plank, cold and dead. Vaska had preceded her. They were doomed before we got to New York anyway, but everyone felt badly. The captain took it philosophically.

"Darwin taught us that all life is a struggle for existence," he said. "They lost out, that's all."

With the hot breath of Africa upon us and peaceful, shimmering waters all around, Anna Louise wondered why she should get into a stew about her lecture dates and vowed nothing could tear her away from the *Minsk*. But when bad weather struck, she wondered whatever possessed her to think she would be happy on a little rolling ship. Dovzhenok was in a similar mood. "Why did I ever think the sea was a nice place?" he asked. "You just don't feel normal when you're thrown around like this. 'Who doesn't know the sea, doesn't know what grief can be'," he quoted from an old Russian proverb. "It's because we sailed on Monday," said the crew, "a bad day to start on a journey."

A cold raw wind drove us on, whipping up ominous waves. We discovered we were due in Gibraltar Sunday, which meant the British wouldn't sell us that Cardiff coal and we'd have to lay over an extra day. Anna Louise heard radio reports that storms north of Scotland were so heavy that ships were putting back to port.

"In the Atlantic, just beyond Gibraltar," said the captain, without regard for our nerves, "an American Liberty ship is breaking up and has sent out an S.O.S. Behind us a Spanish ship has lost its rudder and is in danger of being dashed to pieces against the rocks."

"Well, anyway, this ship couldn't break up," said Anna Louise.

"It could happen to any ship," said the captain remorselessly.

The gay Ivanov came in with a very long face. He drew a diagram with his knife on the tablecloth. "Here's the *Minsk*. Over here's Gibraltar. Before we get there we have to turn and go through this narrow passage. The whole Mediterranean pours in from one side, the whole Atlantic from the other. *Tam kashmar* (It's a nightmare there). We'd be churned to pieces in a storm like this."

The helmsman appeared and told Galya and Lida: "We're turning the ship around. Put the dishes away quick."

They put away everything lying around loose. Then they went off and I was alone in the saloon. Through the fore windows I saw Anna Louise slithering around the deck. Suddenly we were lifted up on the crest of a monstrous wave. The bow, somewhere over my head, began swinging to the right. The ship's whistle blew wildly. We were balanced somewhere between earth and heaven, reeling around sickeningly, the whistle blowing and blowing. I could see a mountain of water hanging over us, and the boat seemed to be simply turning over. I shut my eyes and clung to the table. Torrents of water roared along the lower decks as we swung from one dizzy angle to another.

After a while I opened my eyes. The turn had been made. Now we were going smack into the teeth of the gale. Waves were churning up over the bow, dashing against the front windows, inundating the whole forward deck.

After a while the first mate came in. Even the solid and dignified Kut had lost some of his composure. He took out his handkerchief and wiped his face.

"You feel all right?" he asked solicitously. "It's a good strong ship. I guess she'll hold."

"Where are we going now?" I asked diffidently.

"Just back," said Kut. "We couldn't go on, so that's all we can do."

The doughty Anna Louise came in, her eyes shining.

"You were out on deck when we turned?" said Kut, aghast. "That was foolish of you. Only an inexperienced person would have done that. You're lucky nothing happened to you."

We learned later that turning the ship around in such a storm was quite a trick.

"First," explained Captain Sariev, "I carefully studied the

waves, how often the big ones came, how long it took the ship to go through them; we measured and timed them. I chose a moment when the ship was riding on three waves—a big one in front, two beneath, a huge one rolling in behind. As the bow was lifted on the crest of the one ahead, I gave the order; we started to turn on the crest of the wave, the two smaller waves coming along behind supporting us. When we were part way around the big wave from behind drove with full force against the port side, and completed the turn for us."

If we had not turned the split second we did, that big wave from behind might have washed over the top deck, carrying away the lifeboats and everything.

At dinner Velikanov brought reports of more ships in trouble. Someone remarked it was too bad with all that men had invented, they hadn't found a way of controlling storms.

"If they had," said Bashevnik, "they would have invented worse storms to use against the enemy."

The storm abated by morning. We turned around again, and were once more on our way to Gibraltar. We had Masha for breakfast, drenched with garlic, tough, but tasty. We were all feeling cheerful, now that the worst of the storm was over.

That afternoon we found ourselves in the cauldron of oceans Ivanov had told us about. In mid-afternoon the Rock itself suddenly loomed out of the mists ahead. It was an exciting run into the harbor, circling around that majestic mountain. The waters turned a bright and lovely green. Hundreds of gulls swirled around.

A pilot should have come out to show us where to anchor. No one came. As for getting coal—the harbor was full of ships waiting for coal and it was too rough at the bunkers for us to get in.

The agent of the Moore-McCormack Line, which services Soviet ships, finally came aboard. When we asked where the pilot was, the agent shrugged his shoulders. "Weather's bad. No pilots have been out for two days."

"Are we in a good place now?" asked the captain. "Worst place you could possibly be," said the agent.

"I was afraid of that," said the captain. "Please inform the harbor master we have hardly enough coal left to get up steam to shift to another place. If the storm gets worse we'll be aground."

The agent said he'd do what he could. After he left, Kut said: "It's always like that. Little attention is paid to Soviet freighters."

Having learned that we were not nervous Nellies, our shipmates now discussed their problems without reserve; and we began to understand the reasons for their anxiety. Manganese is a difficult and dangerous cargo, because of its weight and shiftiness. The Germans sank all the Soviet ore-carrying freighters, so the *Minsk* had been pressed into service. In rough weather the strain on the boat, carrying such a load, is very great. While the *Minsk* was strong and sturdy, four or five such trips and she would be through.

The British pilot, who finally came aboard, turned out to be a very intelligent man. He had been in Spain during the Civil War, and had seen how the Italians and Germans got their agents to foment strikes, throw bombs, make all sorts of trouble, which was then blamed on the Russians.

"My government didn't understand what was going on," he said. "Those Spanish Republicans put up a wonderful fight. If they'd only received more help they would have won, and maybe Hitler would have been stopped right there. The Spanish people deserve better than what they've got now."

This reminded Captain Sariev of the time he had gone through these waters in 1937, during the civil war. He had no intention of stopping at a Spanish port. But a Franco armed cruiser forced him back to the Balearic Islands.

"They were so impolite," he said, "they were behind me, and every time our boat deviated a few feet from its course a shot rang out."

"There's no need for that," I told them, "I'm not trying to escape, and even if I did you could overtake me." They took me into port at Majorca, and kept me up all night. They knew I had had no food, but didn't even offer a cup of tea. "Am I a prisoner-of-war?" I asked. "No," they said. "Am I under arrest?" I asked. "No," they said. "Then let me go," I demanded. "No," they said.

"After ten days I prepared a list of products we needed and took it to the commander of the port. He crossed out one thing after another. 'This we haven't got, and this, and this.' 'Just the same, you have to sell me food,' I said. 'You've kept me here all this time, and my men are hungry.'"

"After a while they delivered some of the things. Their commandant asked for Spanish money. I said I hadn't any, my government would pay. He said, 'Our governments don't recognize

each other, how can your government pay? Haven't you got some other kind of money, maybe British pounds?' I said no, so he went away dissatisfied, but I had the products on board.

"I sent for him again and said I needed coal. He was furious. 'You make a lot of trouble,' he said. 'Then why keep me here?' I asked. He came back in a few hours and said, 'You've got to get out of here right away.' I knew the waters were mined, so I said, 'No, I'll stay here tonight, you can send me a pilot in the morning.'

"He went away again. After a while he came back with about forty soldiers, ragged and tattered, regular bandits. I said, 'What are these soldiers for?' He said, 'We are going to search your ship.' 'You are stronger,' I told him. 'Of course you can do it if you want, but you have no right, and I protest it.' I said he would have to take me ashore and get hold of the Consul of a neutral country, and then we would discuss the matter. So he took me back in his boat.

"I felt uncomfortable in that boat with forty armed bandits. As we reached shore, I saw a group of fishermen and workers standing there. I noticed some of them scratching their ears, and as they scratched, their hands would close into a fist. They were giving me the Red Front salute! I felt better. When they got me on shore I asked them to bring the English or French Consul to me.

"After a while they came back with word that the French Consul was sick, and the British Consul had gone hunting. They offered to send me a German or Italian Consul. 'No, thank you,' I said. 'I'll take a Swedish or Norwegian.' Presently they got hold of a Swedish representative, and I agreed to let them examine my freight but not the cabins of the crew. I was glad to get away from Majorca. And I was lucky at that. My good friend, the captain of the *Komsomol* had his ship sunk under him by Franco's men. He and his whole crew were held in jail six months."

At last a cutter came alongside and the captain took us ashore. For Anna Louise and myself there were no formalities, but except for the captain and first mate our Russian shipmates were prevented from going ashore by British red tape. In the Moore-McCormack office, the captain was received by the chief agent, who immediately asked if he had any caviar. The captain's presence has a remarkable effect; in a short time it appeared that we would be moved up for bunkering early in the morning.

Anna Louise and I climbed up a series of steps through Spanish gardens with arbors and palm trees and flowering vines, to make a call on the American Consul. Tall and suave, he had a very British air. We thought he might be interested in hearing something about the Soviet Union. All he asked was whether we had really been permitted to see anything, and that was that.

He told us he was having trouble finding transportation home for people stranded here from ships disabled by the storm.

"That was the worst storm we've known around here," he said.

He gave us a copy of the *Gibraltar Chronicle* of January 7, with an account of it, which began: "This is the story of one of the fiercest gales—and the longest in living memory."

Later I wandered alone through the main stem, marveling at the Britishness of the British, the Yankee-ness of the Yanks, the Scottishness of the Scotch, the Spanishness of the Spaniards (all the workers and many of the tradespeople and office workers of Gibraltar are Spanish). But no nationality are so completely and consistently themselves as the British, especially the officers with their Monty caps and short jackets and walking sticks.

I ran into Captain Sariev, in a crowd gathering around a little open square. I asked a British Bobby straight from Piccadilly what was up. He said it was the "Ceremony of the Keys" held every Wednesday afternoon at five o'clock in commemoration of Britain's taking of Gibraltar. The captain watched in amazement as a group of British Tommies, six men on horseback and several elderly officers solemnly went through some strange maneuvers.

Returning to our ship that evening, we noticed that the other freighters in the harbor were rusty and messy looking. Our *Minsk* was handsome in comparison. As we came close to her the Captain said: "He's a beautiful ship—strong, reliable, a real beauty." I asked, "Why he?" The captain explained that in Russian *parakhod* (steamship) is masculine.

"A sailboat is a lady," he said, "but a steamship—he's a man."

Next day we took on our coal and by midnight were under way again. At our first breakfast on the Atlantic the captain asked me how I had rested.

"Wonderfully!" I told him. "The Atlantic rocks you as gently as a babe in a cradle."

He looked at me with a faint gleam of amusement in his eyes. "Wait," he said. Sure enough, as soon as we were away from the

protection of the Spanish coast, the swells grew long and deep, and the ship rolled terrifyingly.

News of the opening of the United Nations Assembly came over the radio, and we heard Bevin trying to emulate Churchill's periods. Anna Louise translated. Bevin said we had reached a turning point in history and it was up to the people of the world to decide whether we shall have peace or another world war, and to support the great ideals being projected by the leaders gathered together in London. Bashevnik, with his simple worker's wisdom, commented: "Isn't the real point that it is up to the people there in London to support the great ideals of peace and freedom and human happiness for which so many of the people of the world have given their lives?"

The captain now had a little more leisure to talk. By chance we discovered he had been awarded the Medal of the Fatherland War, the medals for the defense of Odessa, Sevastopol, and the Caucasus, the Victory medal—and had recently been notified of another award for his Black Sea operations. He never wore any of his decorations.

Sariev talked with tenderness about his family—his five brothers, the old mother they all love so much, so very wise they still go to her for advice; the great grandmother who lived to be 138; the grandmother of 93 who still trots around to look at the crops.

Captain Sariev's father was a teacher before the Revolution, and a military commissar during the Revolution itself. All six sons went through the school of the Komsomols and then the party. The father died in 1929, and the rest of the family stayed close together. All six sons were in the war; the youngest was killed.

"Every summer up to 1939 we used to gather at my mother's home in Anape on the Black Sea," the captain told me. "I'd wire my brothers asking when they could get away, compare all the answers, and figure out just what dates would bring us all together at the same time. Then we'd all meet at my mother's house, with our wives and children. We all had pretty responsible positions but home with our mother we were all kids again. You can't imagine what good times we had."

The little house in Anape that once held all this love and gayety doesn't exist any more. It was destroyed by German bombs. The mother lives with the older son at Krasnodar. She misses her home by the sea, and the sons plan to build her another, where

they hope some day to gather again in peaceful, joyous reunion.

They were all anxious about their mother during the war. One day in Novorossisk, Sariev heard that Krasnodar had fallen, and the Germans would soon reach Anape. He asked permission to send his family to safety while his boat was being loaded. His chief gave him a military car, and two hours later, he was in Anape, already being bombed. There was no transportation, everything was in disorder. With his mother was her wounded second son, still in bandages, his wife and children.

Sariev went out and sat down on a bench by the road, lit a cigarette, and tried to figure out his next move. Two aviators stopped and called him by name. "Dmitri Spiridonovich—what's the matter? What can we do for you?" He did not stop to ask how they knew him, but told them his problem. "How many automobiles do you need?" they asked. "One truck," he said, "for the family and their things." "Don't worry, at six o'clock the truck will be here, and we'll take the family with us to Sochi, where they can get a train for Armenia."

Only then did he ask who they were and how they knew him. "Don't you remember us, Comrade Captain? From Odessa?" Then he remembered.

When Stalin gave orders to abandon Odessa, Captain Sariev was in command of one of the five ships evacuating troops. The ships left at half-hour intervals, not to be close together in case of bombing. Captain Sariev had over 5,000 men aboard, and the military supplies they had salvaged. He was pulling away when several truckloads of aviators came along and called to him to take them aboard. More followed, about 600 men altogether.

"I looked over my ship. People were packed so closely together there wasn't an inch of space. There was no way of getting another 600 or even 60 men in there. But they were our Red Army men—and mine was the last ship. So I had my men throw out war equipment and somehow we packed them in and got them all to safety.

"These two young aviators were the officers in command of that aviation regiment, now passing through Anape."

Captain Sariev refused to be pessimistic about the state of the world. He thought there were enough wise people to avoid another war. The world has to fumble around a bit before it gets used to being in a state of peace. "It's like wearing a new shoe," he said.

"It doesn't fit at first, it hurts and it squeaks. After a while it softens up."

It was one of those days when sun and air and sea filled you with passionate delight. The prow was swinging with a lovely motion up, up, down and around, the spray was flying back, the sapphire water fell away from our sides laced with long threads of foam.

I looked in at the galley where Blin, the Jewish cook, and Marusia were peeling potatoes. In the cavalry during the war, Blin had fought at Stalingrad, back across the Ukraine, into Hungary and Yugoslavia. He came to sea because he wanted to see America. "Tell me," he said, "what do they think about Jews in America?" He took it hard that there was anti-Semitism in America. "You mean it?" he asked. "In your great free country?"

He went on: "Why can't our people have peace? Do you know what Hitler did to us? There were nine people in my family; I'm the only one left. My seventy-six-year-old mother and my two sisters and two brothers were murdered at Kamenets Podolsk, another brother was hanged at Kiev, two brothers in the army were both killed. Both were officers, one a colonel."

Marusia told me she had been at sea since 1929, when she was a fifteen-year-old girl, and wouldn't know what to do on land.

"It's good to be at sea when it's peaceful like this, but it was terrible during the war," she went on. "I went down eight times."

Marusia must have been a beautiful girl before the war. Now she is scarred all over, her heart is bad, her nerves are bad. Her husband was a no-good guy who ran around with other women. Five times she forgave him and took him back. But the sixth time she said she was through. "But it's lonely without a husband," she sighed.

She was in Novorossisk when the enemy came. She ran out into the yard and there were the Germans just down the street. Someone yelled at her to run, they were gathering all the young women to put in brothels. The bullets pelted after her, but she ran all the way to the next town, six miles away.

I paid a visit to Dr. Tarasova in her cozy little infirmary. I asked her whether she had many patients. "The men often think they're ill just before they have to go on watch—they can develop terrible toothaches or stomach aches sometimes," she told me. "But it's usually nothing serious. Sailors are a healthy lot."

Dr. Tarasova is only twenty-three. She finished medical college in Krasnodar just before the war broke out, and was sent right to the front. There she met a major in counter-intelligence and married him. But she only had a few months with him. He never came back from one of his trips.

She had been at sea only since last May, and liked it, but admitted she was lonely. She had fallen in love with the engineer of her last ship.

At tea one day we sat around discussing the Soviet elections. This led to some questions about American elections. Our shipmates wanted to know if there wasn't someone in America who might follow Roosevelt's ideas. "How about Joseph E. Davies? Wouldn't he be a good choice?" suggested Ivanov. Someone asked how about Henry Wallace?

A news report about the United Nations Assembly came over the radio, a long involved discussion on procedural matters was going on.

"What are they bothering about all these details for?" asked Bashevnik. "They have only one job to do there—to get rid of war for good. Everything else can come later. About forty million people were killed in this war. People should have a chance to rebuild and lead happy lives and develop their culture—what's there to live for if everything is going to be smashed to bits every so often?"

Every evening the crew gathered in their Red Corner to play chess, dominoes, work picture puzzles, chew the rag, while young Mischa drummed on the piano. They played dominoes in a wild and reckless sailors' way, slamming down the pieces with a terrific flourish and bang. Hearts is another popular game. When they pull a card from their hand, they swing it over their left shoulder, execute a wide figure eight in the air and slam it down on the table, meanwhile keeping up an endless patter to fool their comrades about what they hold in their hands. No poker faces for these boys! Some of them are so beautifully tattooed, they never wear shirts if they can help it. They are simple, ordinary, friendly fellows—Armenian, Jew, Russian, Georgian, Ossetian, Kirghiz, Ukrainian. They are one big family on the *Minsk* as everywhere in the Soviet Union. One was at Stalingrad, one at Sevastopol, one in Poland, one helped take Berlin. And they never talk to you without telling you how terrible a thing is war and how they hope it never will

happen again. "Now the Germans and the Japs are smashed, there's no one else who will want to fight us, is there?" asks the Armenian sailor, with a terrible urgency in his voice.

In one of our talks Kut began reminiscing about Novorossisk:

"There's not a single house left whole there. I think the destruction there was as great as at Stalingrad. But even when the Germans had the whole town, there were places that our Red Army never gave up. There are two cement factories side by side. One the Germans held, and ours had the other. And then there was a little piece of land, Novaya Zemlya, which our troops held throughout. It was that blood-soaked little piece of land that made it possible for us to win back Novorossisk."

Our talk turned to the first years of the Revolution, and I remarked that I was ashamed to remember that my own country had taken part in the intervention.

"But in the Far East," said Kut, "America helped us against the Japanese. I was eight years old. We lived in a small town near Vladivostok. Our people thought of the Americans as their friends. The Americans did not try to take over our country the way the Japanese did. There were cases when the Japanese arrested our people, and the Americans freed them. And we heard a lot about your General Graves and what a good man he was."

One evening late I climbed up to the top deck. The moon, almost full, stood high in the zenith, brightening no single pathway down the sea, but the whole world at once. The few stars were veiled in soft clouds. From the top bridge where the mates stand their watch, you could see the whole graceful ship from bow to stern. The tall mast was a lovely sight swinging against the sky, its sturdy ropes sweeping down and outward like gossamer threads in the moonlight, the bow plunging forward through gently foaming waves.

It was Ivanov's watch. "This is the kind of a night a fellow likes to be on shore with a pretty girl," he complained. Kostya said it was especially dull because he could not even make calculations by the stars. There was only one visible. And Masfield notwithstanding, one star is not enough to steer a ship by.

Next day there was a high wind, and mountainous swells, but it was clear. Grisha, the Armenian sailor, was again painting furiously. He was blasé about going to America, he'd been there so many times. He liked Norfolk better than New York, it was

more like Odessa, his home. He told me his thirteen-year-old son was killed by a bomb. Now he has only a little girl left. "She's pretty—didn't you see her on the boat before we sailed?" He asked where he could buy the nicest doll for her.

Despite the dirty weather, Grisha preferred the Atlantic to the Black Sea. "In the Black Sea it's choppy and rough all the time. The Atlantic is a more cultured ocean."

In the galley Marusia was scrubbing vigorously. A tantalizing nutty odor rose from the twenty loaves of bread she was baking. Blin was cooking a chicken for Lida, who was sick in bed. He was still shaking his head over anti-Semitism in America. "I thought America was such a good country," he said. "I thought only fascists were anti-Semites!"

Marusia started singing *Beloved City* in a high sweet voice.

"Sipnichik wrote that song, you know," she told me. "Volodya—he wrote the words and the music, and then he went out and was killed at Sevastopol. He was in the navy. . . ."

"Did you know him?" I asked.

"Of course, who didn't? I used to see him when his ship was stationed at Novorossisk. When the Navy gave its amateur evenings, he would come on the platform and look around and toss his golden head and sing and sing, making up the couplets as he went along. He was tall and handsome and blond and slim, but very strong. All the girls were mad about him. And then he would dance—oh, how he could dance. . . ."

Anna Louise kept looking at the barometer which stayed persistently at fair. The captain told her to pay no attention to it, we were now at a place where the warm waters of the gulf stream and the cold current from Labrador were all mixed up, and the barometer gets completely confused. "But the real reason we are having so much bad weather," Dmitri Spiridonovich went on, looking solemnly out of the window, "is because of the women on board."

I pretended to be shocked to hear anything like this from a Soviet citizen, even in joke, and the captain hastened to assure me that he was really only kidding because they, of course, were already long used to having women at sea. But still, he said, it was a sailor's tradition everywhere that women brought bad luck on ships. In the early days of the Soviet Union the old-timers still clung to this superstition. On the sailing vessel on which he had

first served after a woman had come aboard, the sailors would spit into the sea for days and scrub the boat from stem to stern to wipe out the evil influence.

I learned to my surprise that all the men on board felt that following the sea is no profession for women. "It's all right in fair weather," said Velikanov, "but much too hard on them in storms." They recalled women engineers and officers they had known. Practically every one had married and left the sea. They agreed that no woman should be a marine engineer in any case, because that meant going through a period as stoker, certainly no job for a woman.

"But what about Lida," I asked, "she was a stoker, wasn't she?" They laughed and began to kid Lida. Evidently her stoking hadn't been too serious.

There was no reflection on the ability of women to handle their jobs in any of this conversation, but rather a chivalrous attitude which has grown during the war. The men gloried in the courage of their women, but hated to see them exposed to battle dangers. These men on the ship had the serious opinion that life at sea was just too rough for women, and not practical from the point of view of the government which put so much time and money into their training, only to have them give up the work and get married. I asked how about Captain Schetinina, of whom we had all heard so much.

"*Ona priamo molodets*. . . . She's a wonderful captain," said Sariev. "I take my hat off to her. I saw her maneuver a ship into port under the most difficult circumstances—no man could have done the job better. It was a Liberty ship that had started breaking in two, and she calmly had repairs made and brought the ship safely into port, quite a feat in the condition the boat was in." But they all agreed that Captain Schetinina was an exception.

The captain went on: "The sailor's life is not an easy one. None of the cultural advantages of people on shore. No theater, no concerts, no normal family life. What can we do? Read books when we have them, sit around and talk, play a game now and then. But in reality we have to live the life practically of monks."

"We're monks all right," put in Kostya ruefully. "Even when we get in to port and think we're going to have a little fun, what happens? Our good comrades on the shore undertake as their

'socialist obligation' to get the ship unloaded and loaded again as quickly as possible, and they shove us right back to sea!"

The biography of the candidate for deputy to the Supreme Soviet nominated from the district of the voters on this boat came by radio. The captain read it at breakfast, and later it was posted up for everyone to see. It read:

"The workers of the Port of Odessa and of the Marty Ship Repairing Works have unanimously nominated as their candidate for deputy to the Council of the Union the well known locomotive engineer Alexander Skverniak.

"Comrade Skverniak comes from a worker's family. He has worked on the railroad from his earliest years. Wherever he has been sent, he has honorably fulfilled his tasks.

"Odessa—Stalingrad—Kursk—Belgorod—Kharkov—and again Odessa. That was the glorious wartime road traveled by Comrade Skverniak. He drove heavy trains carrying troops, armaments, supplies, right up to the very front lines, delivered munitions where the heaviest battles were raging. On his locomotive he was one of the first to return to his native Odessa, and since that time has been working at the restoration of transport.

"Comrade Skverniak is Assistant Secretary of the Party organization of his depot, an active Bolshevik and a patriot."

Those who came from Odessa knew about Skverniak and thought him a good man. "And anyway we trust our comrades," remarked Bashevnik. "They examine the qualifications of all the candidates who are put forward very carefully. They wouldn't pick anyone they weren't sure would protect our interests."

After answering my questions about Soviet elections, Dovzhenok said, "I've heard that in your country you don't vote directly, but have a system of electors which means a president can be elected even though a majority of people vote against him. And I've heard that in some states in your country less than five per cent of the people can vote on account of a tax that keeps Negroes and poor white people from voting. Is that true?"

"Yes, I'm afraid it is," I said.

"And can sailors on boats, people on trains, in hospitals, or wherever they happen to be, vote, as we can?" I tried to explain our residence qualifications, which didn't make sense to Dovzhenok.

One wild night I went out on deck before turning in and

saw a terrifyingly beautiful sight. Through a momentary rift in the heavy clouds, a full bright moon lit the whole sea with its monstrous roaring waves and foaming breakers. There was little sleep that night, and the incessant banging and clatter sounded as though the ship were breaking up.

Next morning at breakfast the gloomy Dane, Yudin, glowered at me kindly. "Now you've felt everything. A real storm, and the wings of a hurricane. You'll have plenty to tell your family about. We just passed through a hurricane—we escaped its center by turning southward—but we were going through its outer edge all day yesterday."

Anna Louise staggered in. "There isn't any land, and we'll never get there," she groaned.

Ivanov rolled in. "So this is your American hospitality," he said. "This is *your* ocean now, and look at the way your country is greeting our Soviet ship!"

I said maybe the storm came from Mexico.

"You can't tell me that," said Ivanov. "I got the worst of it during my watch, I made the hurricane show me its passport, and it was American; every wave was marked, 'Made in ze U.S.A.'"

I whiled away most of that stormy day down in the Red Corner where the boys were having a chess tournament. At the other end of the table Anna Louise and I played dominoes with some stokers just off from their shift.

Anna Louise went into the dining saloon to turn on the radio and found the captain seated at the table with the first mate, the engineer, and one or two others. She concluded that some pretty serious crisis must be on and started to walk away, but Kut motioned her to sit down. The captain was telling about a trip he once made in the Behring Sea. A scientist at one of their ports of call had asked Captain Sariev to take his sick wife to Petrovlovsk, the nearest port with a hospital. It was a rough trip. The invalid grew worse and next morning she was dead. They wrapped her in canvas and gave her burial in the stormy sea. Two hours later the weather cleared, the wind died down, and everything was fine. The sailors said, "See, it all came from having a woman on board. Now we've gotten rid of her everything is all right." Captain Sariev went on:

"But the good weather didn't hold. The wind came up again, and we couldn't make any headway. The storm grew worse. My

coal was giving out. We were only two days out from Petropavlovsk, but it took me ten days to get in. We tried to figure out what the trouble was. You see when there's a woman on a ship, Poseidon stirs up bad weather because he wants her for himself. And then when he gets her he's satisfied. But in this case, the woman wasn't young. So we decided that when Poseidon opened up the package and found an old woman inside—he flew into a rage again.”

At dinner I said to the captain: “I understand there was a meeting of your officers and crew, and they decided this bad weather comes from having two women passengers aboard, so they petitioned you to throw us overboard. But you decided to protect us, and so to quiet them down you explained to them it wouldn't do any good, that Poseidon liked them young and we wouldn't suit his taste at all.”

The captain looked embarrassed. “Who told you that?” he asked. “It wasn't that way at all. I was simply telling about something that really happened.”

It was amusing to see his discomfiture and not at all polite of me to put him in such an ungallant light.

Anna Louise, studying a meteorological map, discovered that cyclones travel in families.

“Well, this one had a family all right,” said the captain, “about ten of them.”

“Will you decorate her as a mother heroine, Comrade Captain?” I asked.

“No,” he said, “I'll leave that to President Truman—they are in his domain.”

Ivanov reported that he had done eighteen knots on his watch. Anna Louise and I figured that meant four-and-a-half miles an hour. Good brisk walking time. And we were still a thousand miles from home.

That morning looking over the wall newspaper issued last month, I discovered that Dovzhenok is the party organizer. He always had so much work to do that we hadn't seen much of him. He spent a lot of his free time in the Red Corner, playing games with the crew. In a conversation with him I learned that in addition to other duties, he did educational work, such as coaching Kovbassa, the stoker, with his studies.

“Kovbassa is a smart lad,” he explained, “and doesn't need

much help. He comes to me every day to go over his lesson, and get his assignment for the next day. Most of our technical staff are helping someone. A commission on land examines them and gives them a certificate, if they pass. A number of people on board have worked up that way. Whenever possible we see that our workers go to marine school where, after all, they can have a much more thorough education. Chizee, for example, who came on as an apprentice, became stoker, machinist, and now oiler. He and Kovbassa will both go to school after this trip."

He explained that the chief responsibility of the party members aboardship was to see to fulfillment, and if possible, over-fulfillment of the plan. This has two aspects, one, the individual's attitude toward his work—he must have a sense of responsibility toward it, enjoy it, understand why it's important. The other, the best technical methods for getting maximum results.

"We used to hold meetings about everything," he said, "long reports or speeches, which tired everyone out. The rest of the time they'd be shouting and screaming at each other, getting nowhere. Now we try to keep our meetings short and businesslike. We spend more time on individual work, or working out problems in small groups.

"Aboardship we have meetings that concern the whole crew, once or twice a month, or whenever there is special need for it. We have separate production meetings twice a month for the machine crew and the deck crew, to consider ways to improve our work."

I remarked that Soviet seamen seemed to be more serious than sailors of other countries.

"Well, maybe, but don't exaggerate the difference. We're human, you know, and a sailor's life is a sailor's life. You can't blame a fellow for doing some drinking after a long trip. It was always a tradition among sailors—I heard it from my father, a sailor in tsarist times—that a sailor had to come on shore with a big beard, a ragged shirt, and get roaring drunk. We're trying to create a new tradition, to make our fellows feel it's important to be clean, well shaved, and uphold the honor of their country in foreign ports. Sometimes we have to have serious talks with the men. But the main thing is, first, that they should be really interested in their work, and, second, organization of their leisure time. The *Minsk* always had a pretty permanent crew before,

and there was something doing all the time. This crew is only beginning to weld together into a real collective. And we haven't got the material equipment we had in peace time. The Komsomol group helps a lot in organizing social and cultural activities."

On another stormy night that murdered sleep, Anna Louise and I ran into each other wandering restlessly around at 3:15 A.M., and settled ourselves in the saloon for a game of gin rummy. Dovzhenok wandered in, drenched with oil and soot. He looked at us in amazement. "What a nice way to spend the night," he said wistfully.

After a while the captain came in. "What in the world are you two doing?" he asked. Anna Louise, with her insatiable curiosity, had to know the exact velocity of the wind. "Over force eleven," said the captain. Almost hurricane strength. After gathering further data about the storm, Anna Louise did some swift calculations and told the captain how long it would last. He looked at her tolerantly. "*Posmotrim*," (we'll see), he said. "Why don't you go back to bed?" It sounded like orders. We went.

From Mikhail Kastornik, machinist, chairman of the ship trade union committee, I learned how the Seamen's Union operates. It includes everyone in the shipping industry on all the rivers and seas of the U.S.S.R., shore and port workers as well as seamen. Its central headquarters are in Leningrad. The workers are approximately 85 per cent organized. The union is subdivided into regional unions. Every year each ship elects a delegate to a regional conference of port and shore workers, where union officials report, general problems are discussed and elections held. If the work of the president or any other officer is not satisfactory to the workers, they may demand his recall and an interim election is held.

The workers of each basin, elect delegates to an all-union conference held approximately every two years, to elect the officers of the Central Committee of the union.

Wage scales are worked out between the union representatives and the shipping administration, who make annual agreements which also cover conditions of work, hours, vacations, etc. The application of these agreements is the concern of the union organization on the ship.

The union includes everyone aboardship from captain to kitchen help. At a general membership meeting a ship committee

of five is elected. If it works successfully, it remains in office a year. If an officer proves unsatisfactory, or if there has been a large crew turnover, an interim election is held.

The general meeting may recommend a chairman and other members of the ship committee, but the committee itself makes the final selection of officers. In a factory a special delegate is elected to administer social insurance; on ships this is a function of the chairman of the committee. The ship committee elects a secretary-treasurer, a member to look after labor protection, one to look after cultural work, and another to cover socialist competition and general production problems.

The entire membership meets at least once a month to hear the ship committee's report and make decisions and suggestions; the ship committee gets together at need. Current matters requiring attention are taken up with the captain, who is the final authority. If a dispute cannot be solved aboardship, it is taken to the next higher instance on shore, in this case the Seamen's Union of the Black Sea Basin and the Black Sea Shipping Administration. If the matter cannot be settled there, it goes to the Central Committee of the Union and the Merchant Marine Ministry. Kastornik told me no question had come up which had not been solved satisfactorily on the ship.

Social insurance is organized on the same basis as in all Soviet trade unions, and is administered by the union itself. All crew members receive free medical service and medicines, and are paid during illness. On shore, the union maintains hospitals and clinics. In peacetime the union had a system of sanatoria to which seamen who needed additional rest and treatment were sent. Most were destroyed by the Germans, and at present only the more serious cases can be accommodated. Social insurance also covers medical and hospital care for dependent members of seamen's families. Illness and hospitalization in foreign ports are also paid for.

Seamen are eligible for old-age pensions at forty-five. Invalid pensions are paid as described elsewhere.

Wage rates in the merchant marine are higher than for similar professions on the shore, everything taken into consideration. Monthly wages on the *Minsk* ranged from around 300 for the lowest paid workers to 1,300 rubles for the captain. In addition, a sum is paid in foreign valuta for every trip to a foreign port, ranging, on this visit to America, from \$25 to \$100 a month. Food

rations are higher than for shore workers. Each crew member and officer receives a ration card; before sailing the cards are pooled and provisions for the whole ship purchased. While the captain and top officers are entitled to higher rations, the food served aboardship is the same for all. There is plentiful meat, fruit, butter, and bread. During periods of transfer from one ship to another, or on visits home, seamen receive their regular ration cards. Soviet seamen are not signed for a single voyage, but are regularly employed.

The committee member in charge of cultural work sees to the ship library, secures motion picture films, arranges chess tournaments and, where there are facilities, amateur circles. In Odessa there is a seamen's "Palace of Culture," and there are seamen's clubs in every port, where musical, dramatic, and art circles are formed on the initiative of the union's cultural director, who also gets visiting troupes to perform and secure tickets to other theaters and concert halls.

On ships, as elsewhere, the eight-hour day had been restored, with overtime permitted only in emergencies. There are two days off a month, and annual vacations with pay range from two weeks to a month. Money compensation was substituted for vacations in wartime. Now vacations have been restored, but due to the manpower shortage, some of the more responsible and highly skilled workers have not yet taken them.

As we neared America, its voices filled the air. Strikes, strikes, strikes! A million and seven hundred thousand workers striking. Seven hundred and fifty thousand steel workers striking—the world's most honored watch. Three hundred thousand meat workers next—Pepsicola hits the spot. The Chicago railroad workers are going out—take B. C. headache powders. The auto workers reassert their demands for a thirty per cent wage increase—our rayon is as soft to the touch as the cheek of the girl you love. Philip Murray asks that the tax rebate for the steel manufacturers be withdrawn—put your money in our savings account. The agricultural machinery workers are out—there are seven-and-a-half million people in New York and they all buy at the A. and P. The filibuster in the Senate against F.E.P.C. continues—and what is your name, little lady, and who is the God of Love beginning with a C? The meat packers are out and the government will take over—B . . . O.O.O.—B . . . O.O.O. Our friends listened in

amazement as we translated the confused babel of sounds.

"America is such a cultured country, why isn't there more good music on the radio?"

We assured them there was a lot of good music, but the air was so full of other things it was hard to prove it.

"Why does there have to be so much advertising, if things are good, won't people buy them anyway?"

"What is a filibuster?"—a difficult thing to explain.

"But isn't America a democracy? How can one Senator block what the majority wants?" The sixty-four dollar question.

"*Skoro Amerika! Skoro Amerika!*" (Soon America), chanted Lidochka. "Oh, it will be good to get to shore and walk around and see things. Is Philadelphia beautiful? (We had just had word we would dock there.) You know, we'll be sorry to have you go—we've gotten so used to you!"

"*Skoro Amerika, Skoro Amerika,*" sang stoker Sascha. "Will your family meet you? You're lucky, we'll have to wait another month to see ours again."

"*Skoro Amerika, Skoro Amerika,*" Blin, the cook, hailed me. "Now we'll get some nice fresh meat." I told him maybe not, the meat packers were on strike.

"Why?"

"They don't get enough wages."

"Why? I thought America was such a rich country." His face clouded. "Tell me, when I go ashore will they treat me badly because I'm a Jew?"

At dinner Anna Louise twirled the radio knobs and a bedlam of sounds filled the dinner saloon. We tried to interpret.

I looked around at the varying expressions. "Everyone listens in amazement to the strange sounds that come out of America." I remarked.

"What do you mean?" asked Velikanov. "Do you think we're such wild people that we can't understand American culture?" I tried to explain that I meant something else.

"You Americans don't appreciate the high technical and cultural level of your own country," Velikanov went on. "Look what a man like Henry Ford has given the world. I'm not talking about his politics. But he's an organizational genius. Think of the millions of automobiles the Ford Company has produced. That's a great contribution to civilization. It will be a long time before

our country reaches that point—but we'll get there some day."

"And it will be a long time before our people are as cultured as the American people," broke in Ivanov. "Take Moscow, now. It's a mad city. We still have a lot of uncultured people in the U.S.S.R.—and they all seem to turn up in Moscow. Look at the crowds in our subway—a man will bump into you with a heavy suitcase and curse you for being in his way. It's different in Lenin-grad. If a woman gets into a crowded street car, someone will get up and give her his seat. Did that ever happen to you in the Moscow Metro?"

I said yes, it had once, and that was more than I could say for the New York subway.

"But, just the same," Ivanov insisted, "you Americans are a cultured people. You have good manners, you do things efficiently. You have good plumbing and niceties of life our people lack. Our people have had to work so hard all these years—trying to build the country before the war—then all the time we had to spend on military preparations because people don't want to let us alone. So many of our people are still rude and uncultured and it will take a long long time to teach them."

"It's true we have good plumbing in America," I said, "and it's a good thing to have. But everywhere I have been in the Soviet Union I have met real courtesy and friendliness, and everywhere I have found that the Soviet people like good books and good music, and take an interest in international affairs."

"Well," Ivanov went on, "things don't go backward. We've heard a lot about what a progressive, democratic country America is, and surely in such a country things must be getting better all the time, the people more cultured."

The talk veered to national customs.

"Look at our barbarous habits of chewing sunflower seeds and spitting them all over the place. What must Americans think of that?" said Ivanov. "It's true it was pretty well stopped before the war—in the cities, anyway. But during the war it started up again, as a nervous habit, I suppose. And sometimes we were hungry, and sunflower seeds helped."

Velikanov wanted to know if it were true that people in America chewed rubber. Kut produced a stick of chewing gum left over from a previous trip. I gave them a demonstration.

"Very original!" said Velikanov.

Our last full day at sea, everyone acted as though they were really sorry to part with us. My own excitement at getting home was tempered by sadness at leaving these dear people who had become such close friends.

Captain Sariev invited us to his cabin for a final supper. "Everyone," he told us, "was very satisfied with you and grateful that you did not turn out to be the kind of people that 'get into a focus.' If you ever come to Odessa, my door will always be open to you."

He raised his glass solemnly. "So much blood was spilled by my people and by yours to seal our friendship, I think it will last forever. Our country is a peaceful country, we want to live at peace, to build a beautiful life. I think it is the same with your country. Your country does not want to seize anyone else's land, nor does mine. Let us drink to friendship, to peace, to a good life for everyone. . . ."

We reached the lightship, got instructions about picking up the pilot and sailed on again. Lights from the shore were visible at last. But just above them loomed heavy, black clouds.

We thought we were in safe, still waters where nothing more could happen. Instead we were enveloped in black fog. We had to take a straight, narrow channel into the mouth of the river. On both sides were shoals. Heavy clouds and rain enclosed us in such an impenetrable curtain that the light on our own mast was hardly visible. Yudin was called up to the bridge. After a while he came back and started explaining the situation to us. He talked so fast we found it hard to follow him, but somehow got the impression the captain had called all the mates up to the bridge for consultation, and that they had decided to drop anchor for the night and go up the river by daylight.

Only we didn't drop anchor; presently we were under way again—and we didn't stop until we got to the mouth of the Delaware, where the pilot came aboard. A little while later the captain invited us up to his cabin. He told us the pilot was getting settled in his quarters for the night and would soon join us. We asked what had happened to change the plan of anchoring for the night.

"What plan of anchoring for the night?" asked the captain.

"Why, when you called in your mates for consultation and you made that collective decision that it was too dangerous to

come on in through the fog without a pilot to guide us. . . . ”

Dmitri Spiridonovich looked amused. “I make my own decisions,” he said. “No pilot was available out where we were, but we got word we would find one at the mouth of the river. I radioed that I would be at the mouth of the river by ten, and came on in—that was all.”

We were loath to give up this fine example of the workings of Soviet democracy, and said so.

“My dear friends,” the captain said tolerantly, “does a commander on a field of battle call his lieutenants and take a vote? We’re fighting with the elements, they don’t wait for us to hold meetings. When things are going smoothly we have time for that. In emergencies, one man has to make a quick decision. What kind of captain would I be if I didn’t do that? What kind of authority would I have on my ship?”

The pilot came in at this point.

“Quite a guy, your captain here,” he told us. “We didn’t expect any more ships to come in tonight. The others are all lying outside at anchor. For someone who’s never been here before and with no visibility, that was a neat maneuvering job.”

The pilot, a big, burly fellow, fell on the food Valya brought us with gusto, and was appreciative of the captain’s vodka. We told him we’d gathered from the radio that a lot was happening in America.

“Oh, yes,” he said, “the country is in the grip of strikes, there’s a crime wave. And the Negroes are making trouble. They’re demanding a lot, and they do it roughly, you know what I mean? I’ll try to explain it so the captain will understand.” He turned to Dmitri Spiridonovich, speaking slowly and distinctly.

“It’s our blacks I’m talking about; they got ideas in their heads during the war about equality and they’re crude about it—they’ll even push a white woman—see—like this.” He shoved the captain’s arm to illustrate what he meant. “That kind of thing—rough stuff—understand?” The captain didn’t understand.

We anchored for the night and had a slow run up the river next day against a heavy ebb tide. “Why,” asked the captain, “should everything be against us here in your America?”

Velikanov and Ivanov got to talking again about all they wanted to see in America. “Tell me honestly,” said Ivanov, “do

Americans still picture all Russians as barbarians with long beards and bombs in their hands?"

"Well, that at least they don't do," I assured him. "There's still plenty of anti-Soviet propaganda, and my country is still far from understanding yours—but Americans learned a lot during the war."

"Perhaps they did," said Ivanov. "But you know very well how quickly it is possible to turn people's minds right around and make them believe the opposite of the truth. After all, they had good reason once before to know how strong our people were, and what good fighters they were. After the Revolution we had to fight not only our own White Guards but the armies of fourteen other nations. We had little else than our bare hands to do it with, but we won, didn't we? And look how soon they forgot all that."

The pilot came up to Anna Louise and asked: "How did you two ladies happen to go to Russia of all places?" We told him. He looked at us as though we were creatures from another world.

"Maybe you can tell me," he said, "what does Russia want out of the post-war world?"

"Peace," I said.

A look of amazement spread over his fat face.

"That's not what we've been told. Why have they got their Red Army everywhere? Why are they trying to force their form of government on so many countries? Why are they stirring up so much trouble?"

Anna Louise said she had been in Poland and the Balkans and talked to many Soviet leaders about policies in other countries, that as far as she had been able to observe they were not trying to force their form of government on anyone. Then we told him something about the destruction we had seen, the deprivations the Soviet people had endured to win the war.

"Will America be able to feed and clothe all those people?" he asked. "Is there anything in it for us?"

He handed me a copy of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* he had brought aboard with him. I started to look through it. Staring at me from an inside page was a coarse cartoon picturing the "Moscow Red" as a huge and menacing ape-man—the kind of thing I'd just finished telling Kostya you wouldn't find any more.

At the moment Kostya came swinging along the deck with his jaunty air. I hastily turned the page and ducked into my

cabin. I could not face him after our recent conversation.

Leafing through the paper I saw a feature article "defining" communism and fascism in parallel columns. "Communism, as it is practiced in Russia, is chiefly a political system which is only superficially different from fascism. . . ."

I thought of my friends on the *Minsk* who had gone down in icy seas, had fought on many fronts to vanquish fascism, and were now so eagerly waiting to set foot on the soil of the country they considered still their friendly ally.

I hid the paper, finished my packing with a heavy heart, and went out on deck for last farewells with Grischa, Mitya, Blin, Lidochka, Marusia, and the rest. The deck was full of bustle of landing preparations, but there were curious, eager and admiring glances shoreward. Grischa, who had grown a sailor's beard—the only beard on the ship—had shaved it off in honor of America.

"So, we got you here after all," he said, "a little late perhaps, but still you're here, and that's good considering the ocean is not a railroad and the *Minsk* not a passenger ship! You won't forget to tell me the name of the store where I can buy the prettiest doll for my little girl?"

I ran up to the bow where Ivanov and the deck crew were pulling chains and ropes around. Two tugboats nuzzled up beside us. Now we were turning up a side stream, and Ivanov pointed out the wharf for which we were headed. He handed me his binoculars and I found a familiar, battered old tan car. Presently two tall figures, one redheaded and one dark, emerged from the car. I started waving frantically and shouting, tears of joy streaming down my cheeks. Ivanov gave me a radiant smile.

"Your husband? Your son?" (He'd heard plenty about them.)
"Happy, happy woman, to be coming home to your family!"

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